MARTHA STEWART

Living

bring on spring!

32 recipes to cook right now

EASY-DOES-IT EASTER
decorated eggs, mix+match menus, colorful cookies, and more

HOW DO YOU CLEAN THAT?
57 secrets for a healthier home

\+ 4 better-for-you weeknight dinners



High-gloss eggs are a striking contrast to a rustic handmade nest. For the how-to, SEE PAGE 103

April 2015
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Martha's Month

Gentle reminders, helpful tips, and important dates.

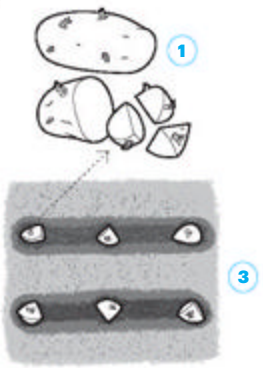
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 **APRIL FOOLS' DAY**	2 Nephew Carter's birthday Decorate eggs for Easter with Jude and Truman *Cardio and core*	3 **GOOD FRIDAY** **PASSOVER BEGINS AT SUNDOWN**	4 Plant new fruit trees
5 **EASTER** Host annual Easter-egg hunt	6 *Weight training*	7 Clean gutters *Pilates*	8 Wash and store heavy sweaters Donate clothing to charity	9 Nephew Charlie's birthday *Cardio and core*	10 Scrape and repaint chicken-coop enclosure *Weight training*	11 **PASSOVER ENDS** First lawn mowing of the season; add clippings to compost
12	13 Speak at The Art of Leadership for Women event in Calgary, Alberta (*theartof.com*)	14	15 Sow lettuce, spinach, and Swiss chard seeds	16 Direct-sow onion, turnip, radish, and parsnip seeds in garden *Cardio and core*	17 Nephew Kirk's birthday *Weight training*	18 Edge and sweep driveway Horseback ride
19 Niece Sophie's birthday	20 Sprinkle grass seeds on bare patches; top with salt hay to keep birds at bay *Weight training*	21 *Pilates*	22 **EARTH DAY** Friend Kathy Sloane's birthday Celebrate Earth Day by gardening	23 Niece Kristina's birthday Colleague Betsy Perreten's birthday *Cardio and core*	24 **ARBOR DAY** Clean baseboards with a feather duster *Weight training*	25 Plant seed potatoes
26 Clean winter blankets and put in storage	27 Host the Matrix Awards in New York City (*nywici.org*)	28 Make fresh ricotta *Pilates*	29 Fill birdbaths with water	30 Friends Andrew and Melanie Heller's anniversary *Cardio and core*		



LIGHT BITE

Try topping a few spoonfuls of fresh ricotta cheese with sliced cherry tomatoes and cucumber, a drizzle of olive oil, and some salt and pepper. Learn to make your own ricotta at *marthastewart.com/fresh-ricotta.*

HOW-TO



Planting Seed Potatoes

1. Cut seed potatoes into quarters or sixths. Try to get at least 2 eyes on each piece to ensure growth.

2. Let cut pieces dry and harden at room temperature, at least 24 hours and up to 48 hours. (If planted fresh, they will rot.)

3. Plant pieces in soil approximately 6 inches deep, with eyes facing up.

PHOTOGRAPH BY BRYAN GARDNER; ILLUSTRATION BY BROWN BIRD DESIGN

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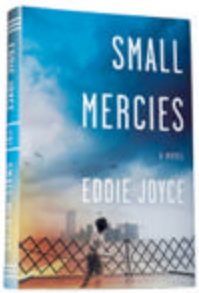
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***LIVING* BOOK CLUB**

Eddie Joyce's debut novel, *Small Mercies* (Viking), offers readers an inside look at one Staten Island family's struggle with grief. Ten years after the death of their youngest son, the characters are still mourning in this poignant, deeply affecting tale.

marthastewart.com/book-club



COLLECTING

Vintage tea and coffee tins make stylish and inexpensive vessels for organizing. We like to use them to corral assorted teas, desk supplies, and cards. The tins are available in a wide range of shapes and colors, and come from all over the world. (The green tin is from a New York City tea distributor prominent in the early 1900s; the yellow box is from Ogo Kaffeerösterei, a German coffee company established in 1928.)

eBay search terms: *vintage tea tins, vintage coffee tins*

Out & About

Where we've been, what we've seen, and where you'll find us.





ON THE ROAD

The Dean hotel is housed in an early-20th-century building in Providence, Rhode Island, that was restored by real-estate development and design firm Ash NYC, a Martha Stewart American Made honorable-mention winner. The rooms were described by one of our editors as "bare bones in the best possible way." Indeed, the artful blend of simple, modern fixtures and handsome antiques feels at once spare and cozy. Local handcrafted furniture, custom linens, and vintage artwork add to the hotel's thoughtfully curated charm.

The Dean, Providence, Rhode Island thedeanhotel.com

WHERE TO FIND MARTHA

Martha Bakes

Martha shares four regional recipes from the Northeast, including a cranberry tart flavored with currant jelly and cognac, and mini chocolate whoopie pies. Tune in for the how-tos, as well as lessons on cooking with chocolate, citrus, and pumpkin.

PBS (check local listings)

Martha Stewart's Cooking School

Catch up on Martha's master classes. In the "Chicken" episode, she prepares a delicious paillard; in "Noodles," she shares her favorite recipe for pad thai; and in "Onion," she gives a tutorial on onion rings. Learn Martha's secrets and so much more!

PBS (check local listings)



INSTAGRAM FAVORITE

We asked to see spring, and the cherry blossoms captured by @anettvelsberg have us champing at the bit to get outside. Want to see your photo here? Follow us on Instagram!

@marthastewart

HALEY WEST (BUNNIES); BRYAN GARDNER (BOOK, TINS); CHRISTIAN HARDER (HOTEL); ANETTVELSBERG.COM (INSTAGRAM)


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AT *MARTHA STEWART LIVING,* the simple, humble egg is a continual source of inspiration, and we always search for fresh ways to celebrate it. In fact, that's the way we look at holiday traditions in general: They are meaningful and magical, but it's good to tweak them, to try something new. We've done just that with our tribute to Easter. This issue is, in fact, a bit of an egg hunt—you'll find these symbols of spring throughout the pages. We show them natural, dyed, and découpaged. There are even egg-shaped cookies.

The embellished eggs and other holiday details at Martha's house are especially delightful. She has amassed a vast collection of decorations, but she never displays them the same way twice. This year, she began with an unexpected palette of greens and purples (see "Shades of Spring," page 68) and built upon it with flowers, egg dye, and sanding sugars. You can borrow her ideas for your own Easter, or try another of our seasonal projects (see Good Things, page 25). And if you're having people over, you may also want to check out "Mix + Match" (page 82); our food editors came up with dishes that work together beautifully so you can pick what you want and create your own perfect menu for a spring dinner—Easter or otherwise.

What I'm most excited about this month, though, is getting outside to garden the little patch of green in front of my city apartment. I plan to put into action some of the lessons I learned from "Just Add (Less) Water" (page 74), about one couple's mission to turn their thirsty landscape into a more water-wise garden: I'm committing to planting only varieties that have low water needs. Less consumption, more conservation—with Earth Day on April 22, this seems a fitting change. Happy spring, everyone!

Eric A. Pike

Eric A. Pike, editor in chief



Eggs aren't just for Easter—this decoration is on display at my house all year round. I will readily admit that I went a little overboard on this project, but I am so happy with the result. It began when I noticed several glass domes filled with eggs at an antiques show. I decided to re-create the look myself with a 22-inch dome I already owned. I love the pastel eggs laid by Martha's Araucana chickens—but I wanted eggs in a variety of sizes. So I purchased all different kinds of blown-out eggs; I dyed some, sponge-painted others, and left others natural, then let them dry completely. (I lost count of how many, but it was definitely in the dozens.) Then I placed the dome upside down in a cardboard box filled with bunched-up newsprint (to hold the dome in place), arranged the eggs in it, and very carefully flipped the dome over. To replicate this display but not the (very) long process, simply use a smaller dome and fewer eggs.



Get the App!

For our collection of egg-decorating techniques and ideas, get our Egg Dyeing 101 app from the App Store.

MATTHEW WILLIAMS (PORTRAIT); ERIC PIKE (EGGS)



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SHADES OF SPRING
Martha decorates her home for Easter with a decidedly nonpastel palette of **purples and greens**.

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A couple in Southern California swap their thirsty landscape for a **water-wise garden**.

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Create the perfect spring feast: Pick a main course, side dishes, and a sweet from our lineup of **seasonal standouts**.

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Learn how to refresh all the often-used, seldom-cleaned **appliances and electronics** in your home.



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SEEDS OF GLORY
Little seeds, big impact: Add sesame, fennel, poppy, and more to your baked goods for welcome boosts of flavor, texture, and nutrition.

These thin, almost lacy crackers are made with four flavorful types of seeds and rye and wheat flours. They add a hearty, healthful crunch to any salad (and are great on their own). For the cracker recipe, see page 119.

JONATHAN LOVEKIN

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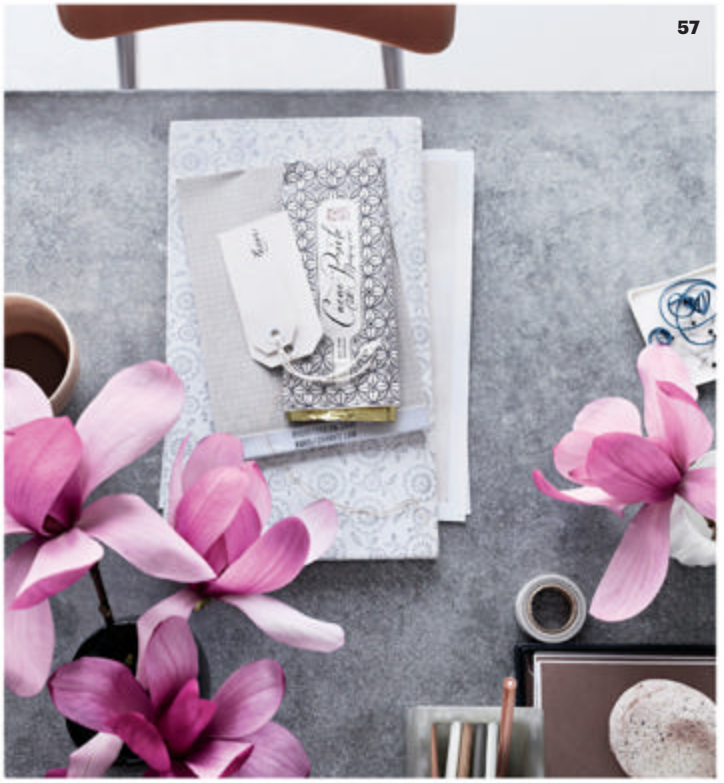


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On the Cover

We had loads of egg-spiration this issue—enough for two covers! The newsstand version, *left*, spotlights our easy coconut-macaroon nests (for the recipe, see page 28). The subscriber version, *right*, features a handmade nest that we embellished with bits of wool and filled with glossy glazed eggs. To make your own glazed eggs, see page 103. Both photographs by Ryan Liebe. **Nest** *and* **glazed eggs,** *ebay.com/americanmade/naked-eggs.*

AARON DYER (EGGS); YASU + JUNKO (LIPSTICKS); STEPHEN KENT JOHNSON (CAKE); PETRA BINDEL (TABLE)



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~~2 tbsps. butter, divided~~
~~2 cloves garlic, minced, divided~~
~~2 tbsps. chopped flat-leaf parsley~~
~~1 1/2 tsps. Italian seasoning~~
~~1/2 onion, diced~~
~~1 1/2 tsps. salt~~
~~1/2 tsp. ground white pepper~~
8 oz. pasta, cooked, drained
2 cups heavy cream
2 tsp. Cajun seasoning
1/2 cup grated Parmesan

1. Prepare pasta according to package directions; drain and set aside.

Sauté sausage for 5 minutes.

2. ~~Cook chicken in butter, season with salt, white pepper and Italian seasoning in a large skillet over medium-high heat until chicken is no longer pink. Stir in onion and parsley; cook until onions are transparent.~~

3. Add ~~garlic cloves~~, cream and Cajun seasoning and boil. Reduce heat; simmer 3–4 mins. or until mixture begins to thicken. Stir in Parmesan. Add pasta and toss.

Great additions are peas, tomatoes or any of your favorite vegetables. Just stir them in and simmer.

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FROM MARTHA

Teach and Inspire



A New Look for Planters

Anyone can transform inexpensive pots and garden ornaments into pieces that look like stone antiques. The trick? Adding a simple coating of sand.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY RYAN LIEBE PORTRAIT BY JONNY VALIANT

A square planter filled with sweet-potato vines makes a beautiful base for this Japanese maple tree.

Fiberglass planter *(similar to shown), homedepot.com.*

Sand Pots

FROM MARTHA





Planter Project
Creating a faux-stone pot or ornament that will withstand the elements requires brushing the item with multisurface paint and waterproof glue, and then coating it completely with sand.

A few years ago, decorating director Kevin Sharkey and I visited with renowned restorer of historical houses Richard Jenrette at his fabulous American Federal home, Edgewater, on the banks of the Hudson River in New York. Outdoors, on the gracious columned porch, we saw what we thought were massive sandstone planters. Neither of us had seen such pots in a light-sand color before, and we questioned our host about the source of such urns. Richard laughed and told us to try to lift the planters, which we did, and we moved them with ease. We then were instructed in the process of making them, and neither Kevin nor I could wait to try it ourselves.

After a bit of experimentation, we mastered the how-to method, and we started "sanding" all sorts of lightweight fiberglass urns, pots, statuary, and planters—each piece looked great. When you try this fun technique for yourself, start by choosing a sand that will look good in or around your home—sand is sold in different colors, and the grains and colors can be mixed and textured, if you wish. The paint color you use should match closely.

I applaud thriftiness, particularly when it is used in an artistic and value-added way. This method for transforming inexpensive, lightweight objects is an example of just that, and well worth the effort.

Group tours of Edgewater, in Barrytown, New York, are available upon request. Visit *classicalamericanhomes.org/edgewater* for more information.

Real stone ornaments are very heavy to move and can be rather expensive. Detailed fiberglass copies of all sorts of pots and ornaments can be transformed into excellent look-alikes.

MAKEUP BY DAISY SCHWARTZBERG; HAIR BY KATSU NAKAMURA



Sand-covered pots can be used indoors as well as outside. This small urn makes an attractive container for one of my favorite fancy begonias.

Fiberglass urn, *in Brown Old Gold, from $15, jamali garden.com.*

PRETTIER POTS

Classic designs like this urn, *left*, take on an old-world appearance, but more modern shapes look great with a stone-like, sandy finish as well.

HOW-TO

Supplies

Plastic bin, larger than planter

Landscaping sand (available at home centers)

Planter or garden ornament, preferably fiberglass or plastic (if ceramic, use a plastic liner inside)

Multisurface paint in a pale, sandy color and paintbrushes

Waterproof wood glue

Sources

Vintage Decor paint, *by Martha Stewart Crafts, in Ivory, $10 for 8 oz., michaels.com.*
Titebond III Ultimate wood glue, *$7, homedepot.com.*

1. Fill bin about halfway with dry sand (if sand is damp, spread it in shallow bins and let dry first). Cover planter completely with multisurface paint; let dry.

2. Mix together 2 parts glue and 1 part paint (mixture will be thick). Brush mixture onto one side of planter, including a few inches inside rim. Working over bin, pour sand over glued area. Turn planter over and press into sand. Repeat with other side of planter. (For a planter with lots of intricate details, work in smaller sections—but don't overlap, or you'll have a seam.) Touch up as necessary with dabs of glue mixture and sand. Let dry overnight before using.



Intertwine lined panel in acacia green reduces heating and cooling costs by 40%*. Shown with Flutter sheer in moonbeam.



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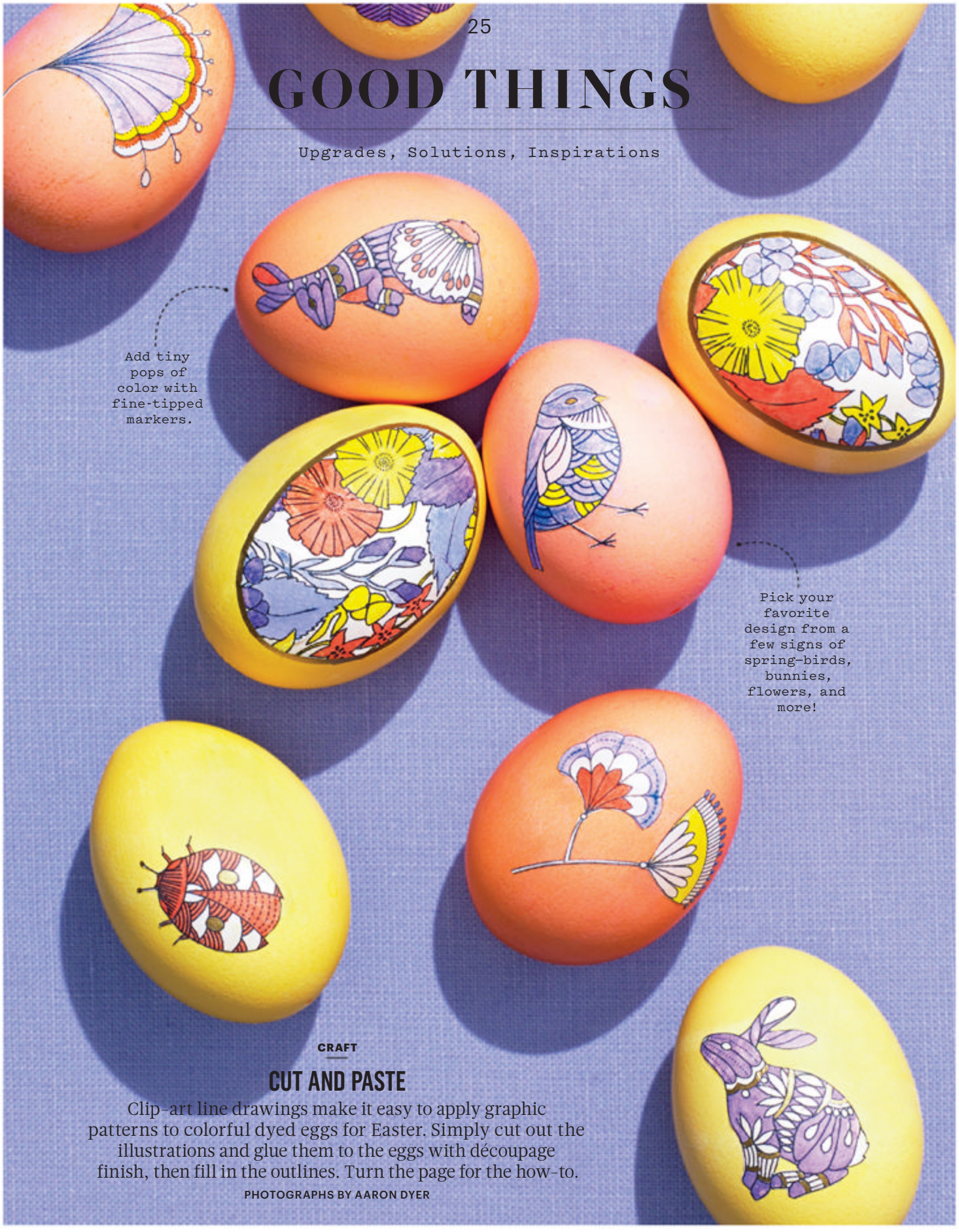
*Cost savings represent the relative cost of heating or cooling an area to account for heat lost or gained through a window. Savings reflect comparison to a bare single-pane window. Energy savings logo developed by JCPenney for exclusive use. Energy savings testing conducted by an independent third-party laboratory.

Savor the dark



GOOD THINGS

Upgrades, Solutions, Inspirations



CRAFT

CUT AND PASTE

Clip-art line drawings make it easy to apply graphic patterns to colorful dyed eggs for Easter. Simply cut out the illustrations and glue them to the eggs with découpage finish, then fill in the outlines. Turn the page for the how-to.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY AARON DYER

PROP STYLING BY HELEN QUINN AT PAT BATES AND ASSOCIATES

CRAFT

Coloring-Book Easter Eggs

The egg-decorating fun doesn't have to end after the eggs are dyed. We asked Millie Marotta, illustrator of the book *Millie Marotta's Animal Kingdom: Color Me, Draw Me* (Lark Crafts; $15, *amazon.com*), to produce some Easter-themed line drawings for us.



Supplies

- Detail scissors
- Matte découpage finish and paintbrush
- Dyed eggs
- Fine-tipped markers

Sources

Durable découpage finish, *by Martha Stewart Crafts, in Matte, $10 for 8 oz., michaels.com.*

HOW-TO

1. Download and print out Marotta's coloring-book illustrations (at *martha stewart.com/coloring-book-eggs*). Cut closely around shapes with detail scissors.

2. For each egg, brush back of drawing with a thin coat of découpage finish. Place illustration where desired on dyed egg; smooth down with your fingers.

3. Let dry 1 hour, then color in design with markers.



HOME

Circles of Light

Stacked and linked together, colorful, inexpensive paper lanterns brighten any interior space, as in this living room. Start by slightly bending the bottom wire inside one lantern and attaching it to the top hook of another. Then hang the series from the ceiling with a screw eye. For a soft glow, thread string lights through the center of the lanterns.

Free-style Ribbing paper lanterns, *by Cultural Intrigue, 20", in Rose Quartz, Mango Orange, and Peach, $11 each, lunabazaar.com.*

CRAFT

Heightened Appeal

Elevate a slate server or wooden cutting board by transforming it into a footed platter. Secure four drawer knobs (we used brass) to the bottom corners of a board with craft glue. The raised platform offers an elegant presentation—and it's easier to maneuver.

Goblet cabinet hardware knobs, *by Martha Stewart Living, 1", in Bedford Brass, $3.50 each, homedepot.com.* **Rectangular slate platter,** *10" by 17", $25, surlatable.com.* **E6000 craft adhesive,** *by Eclectic Products, $4 for 2 oz., michaels.com.*



WHITE LINEN CHAIR, *ABCHOME.COM*


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Fill the baskets with jelly beans, Jordan almonds, and malted-milk eggs.

FOOD

Coconut-Macaroon Nests

Active Time: **15 min.**
Total Time: **1 hr.**
Makes: **36**

Press this macaroon mixture into mini muffin tins to create bite-size baskets for your favorite Easter candies. For a chocolate version, fill each basket two-thirds full with melted chocolate (we used three ounces total) and let them set before adding candies.

Vegetable-oil cooking spray

- **4 large egg whites**
- **½ teaspoon coarse salt**
- **1 package (14 ounces) sweetened flaked coconut**

1. Preheat oven to 300°. Coat mini muffin tins with cooking spray.

2. In a bowl, stir together whites and salt with a fork; mix in coconut. Drop 2 tablespoons of mixture into each prepared tin.

3. Lightly press mixture into bottom and up sides of each cup. Bake until light golden on top, 28 to 30 minutes.

4. Let cool in tins on a wire rack 10 minutes, then run a thin metal spatula around sides to loosen. Lift out of cups; let cool completely.

FOOD

Shake It Up

Enjoy green tea in a snap by shaking instead of steeping. Matcha green-tea powder—finely milled whole tea leaves—cuts out time-consuming brewing and also offers greater nutritional value than regular green tea. (You're ingesting the whole leaves, not just the brewed water.) Combine a few ice cubes, 1 cup water, and ½ teaspoon matcha powder in a lidded jar. Sweeten with superfine sugar or agave syrup, if desired. Secure the lid and shake vigorously several times until the powder is dissolved.



CRAFT

Water Repeller

Wax-coated fabric has a great look, is sturdy, and resists water. Use this DIY technique to upgrade something you already own, such as outdoor fabric place mats or a lightweight hat; or to treat the fabric of your next craft, like one of the totes on page 37. Just rub fabric wax onto cotton, canvas, linen, or denim, then set it with a hair dryer. You can continue to add layers to make the fabric even waxier.

Otter wax, *$13 for 2.25 oz., otterwax.com.*



TIP

Don't toss store-bought forced bulbs, such as daffodils, when they are nearing their end. Instead, plant the bulbs after they flower but before the foliage fades, to give them a chance to bloom again next year.



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McCormick Cinnamon Caramel Swirl Bars

1 1/2 cups flour
2 tsp. baking powder
2 tsp. **McCormick Ground Cinnamon**
1/4 tsp. salt
1 1/2 cups firmly packed brown sugar
1/2 cup (1 stick) butter, melted
2 eggs
1 tbsp. **McCormick Pure Vanilla Extract**
1 cup coarsely chopped pecans
1 pkg. (14 oz.) caramels, unwrapped
1/4 cup milk

MIX flour, baking powder, cinnamon and salt. Set aside. Mix brown sugar, butter, eggs, vanilla and pecans in large bowl until well blended. Add flour mixture; mix well. Reserve 1 cup of the batter. Spread remaining batter into lightly greased foil-lined 13x9-inch baking pan. Bake in preheated 350°F oven 15 minutes or until firm.

MICROWAVE caramels and milk in microwavable bowl on HIGH 2 to 3 minutes or until caramels are completely melted, stirring after every minute. Cool 5 minutes or until slightly thickened. Pour over baked layer in pan, spreading to within 1/2 inch of edges. Drop reserved 1 cup batter by spoonfuls over caramel layer. Cut through batter with knife several times for marble effect.

BAKE 15 to 20 minutes longer or until center is set. Cool in pan on wire rack. Lift from pan. Cut into bars.

Makes 24 servings.



For more great-tasting recipes, visit mccormick.com



Spinach + Sliced Cucumber + Toasted Pumpkin Seeds

Shredded Radicchio + Sliced Red Onion + Apple Wedges

FOOD

Three's Company

A trio of ingredients seasoned with salt and pepper—plus a splash of extra-virgin olive oil and vinegar or lemon juice—are all it takes to make a standout spring salad. The key is to choose delicious ingredients with varying but complementary flavors and textures—a bitter item such as radicchio, for example, with the sweetness of apples and the crunch of red onions.

Frisée + Sliced Fennel + Shaved Pecorino

TIP

Alcohol swabs, available at drugstores, are great for gardeners to keep on hand. Use them to disinfect pruners to prevent the spread of fungal and bacterial diseases.



CRAFT

Floral Flourish

Spruce up a woven basket with a twist of herbs and flowers for a beautiful, fragrant Easter display. Use green floral wire to group together your arrangement, then work it into the weave of the basket. You can also stick the leaves and flowers directly into the basket's weave. For this basket, we used flowering dill, chamomile, roses, variegated euonymus, and ivy. To ensure that your basket stays fresh for the egg hunt, wait to add the flowers until Easter morning.

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**The taste of the holidays,
without having to get the decorations out of the attic.**

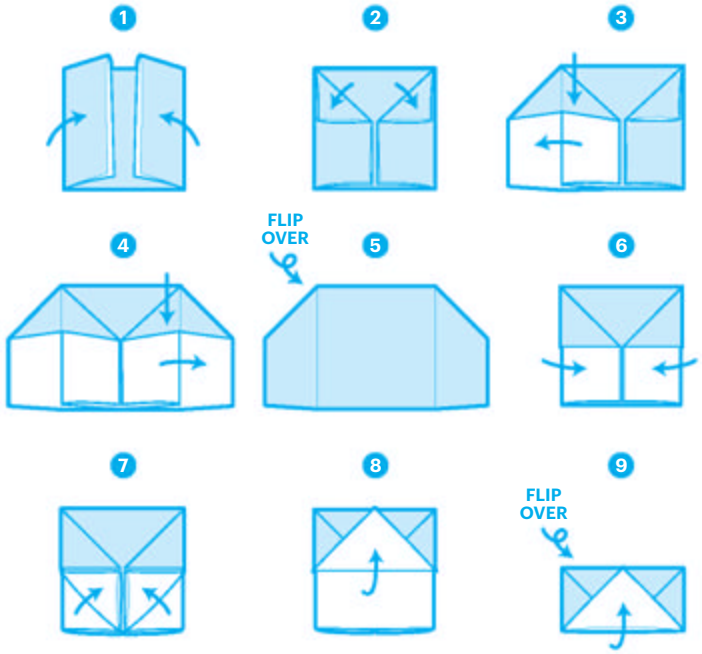


Slow Roasted and Carved Thick. *Oscar Mayer Carving Board* gives you all the taste of the holidays, without all the hassle.

It's Holiday, Any Day Food. It's *Oscar Mayer.*



Choose paper with a different color on each side. Once it's folded into shape, you'll see both hues.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY BROWN BIRD DESIGN; PROP STYLING BY CARLA GONZALEZ-HART (PLANTERS)

CRAFT

In the Fold

When folded in a series of simple steps, thin paper can become sturdy enough to hold an egg in place. Start with squares of origami paper, folded in half, then follow the steps, *right*, exactly as shown. The cups can double as fun place-card holders for Easter—just write a guest's name on each egg with a colored marker.



GARDEN

Prettier Pots

Create a coordinated set of patterned planters by relief-spray-painting terra-cotta or other solid-colored vessels. First, take a piece of lace or crochet trim and wrap it around a porous pot, such as clay; secure it in place with tape. Spray clear polyurethane over the lace. The spray creates a subtle difference in color as it soaks into the pot. Let it dry thoroughly before removing the lace.

Clear gloss fast-drying polyurethane spray, *by Minwax, $8, homedepot.com.*



TIP

As the plants in your garden start to grow this spring, feed them with organic fertilizer before putting down a fresh layer of mulch. This puts nutrients right where they're needed—at the roots.



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- **GET SET:** Kick off your holiday meal by placing mini treat baskets filled with M&M'S® Brand Chocolate Candies as placecards at your Easter table. Decorate each with a personalized hangtag for a handmade touch.
- **HOST A BUNNY BAKE-OFF:** Invite friends and family to join you in baking Easter egg- and bunny-shaped sugar cookies. Set out bowls of M&M'S® Brand Chocolate Candies so your guests can embellish their cookies with delicious chocolate—and enjoy a tasty snack while decorating!
- **MAKE IT PERSONAL:** Got a peanut butter lover in the family? Know someone who's nuts for almonds? This Easter, make your baskets and cookies as individual as those to whom they will be gifted by incorporating their favorite variety M&M'S® Brand Chocolate Candies.

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BEAUTY & STYLE

Tips, DIY, News



To secure lightweight leather handles, hand-stitch an X on each end using colorful waxed twine.

Cut shorter handles to make a grab-and-go bag, *above*, or leave the straps long for an over-the-shoulder tote, *left*.

STRAP HAPPY

It's a cinch to give a plain tote bag a big dose of personality—just add stylish straps. Start with an easy-to-sew bag in any size you like, then add buckles or grommets. From there, the options for strap materials are endless—patterned ribbon, nylon rope, and supple leather are all fair game.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY SARAH ANNE WARD

marthastewart.com/diystyle
DIY videos with crafts editor Erin Furey.

GET A HANDLE ON IT

To make a basic tote, first cut a piece of canvas double the desired length plus 5 inches, and 1 inch wider all around. Fold it in half (wrong sides together) and sew both sides with a ½-inch seam allowance, then double-hem the top by folding the top edge ½ inch, then 2 inches, and edge-stitching all around.

BUCKLE TOTE

Supplies

- Sewing supplies
- 4 buckles, ⅝ inch
- Handleless tote
- Rotary leather punch
- 2 lightweight cowhide leather strips, each ⅝ inch wide, cut to desired length

HOW-TO

1. Using strong thread, sew two buckles each to top edge of bag front and back, spacing as desired (ours are 2 inches from bag sides). Stitch around each buckle's center bar several times to ensure secure attachment.

2. Punch holes 1 inch apart in leather strips, starting about 2 inches from ends. Slide ends through buckles and fasten.



Spin the wheel of the punch to select the hole size. (We used the ⅛-inch tube.)

GROMMET TOTE

Supplies

- Handleless tote
- Grommet kit
- Craft knife
- Ribbon, cord, or leather strips, cut to desired length
- Sewing supplies

HOW-TO

1. Mark desired grommet placement on bag front and back by tracing inside of a grommet opening with a pencil.

2. Using craft knife, cut an X in marked circles. Set 2 grommets each on front and back of bag, following kit instructions.

3. Ribbon handles: Slide ribbon ends through grommets at bag front. Fold ends under ¼ inch twice; pin to other side of ribbon at bag top. Sew to secure. Repeat at bag back. **Cord handles:** Thread cord ends through grommets; knot to secure.



For a video on how to set a grommet, go to *marthastewart.com/set-grommet.*

GREAT LENGTHS

Built to last, these durable materials can all be used for straps.



A trim-store staple, **woven ribbon** *comes in hundreds of colors and patterns.*



Lightweight leather strips *turn a workaday tote into an everyday luxury.*



Braided jute cord *lends a beachy feel.*



Braided cotton cord *brings a pop of color and texture.*

Sources

Economy rotary leather punch, *$15;* **heavyweight natural cowhide leather strip,** *⅝", $10 for 50 ft.; and* **nickel-plated buckles,** *⅝" (similar to shown), $2 each, tandyleatherfactory.com.* **Eyelets kits,** *by Dritz, ¼" and 7/16", in Silver, from $5 each; and* **striped ribbon** *(#55102001), 1", $2 a yd., mjtrim.com.* **Diamond-braid poly rope,** *⅜", in Blue and White, $10 for 100 ft., homedepot.com.* **Textured leather** *(#8901ct), by Shindo, width 12, in color #608, $10 a meter, 212-868-9311.* **Round maple wooden hooks,** *lightandladder.com.*

marthastewart.com/basic-tote-bag
For full instructions on how to make your own basic tote.


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Coral Ménagerie lipstick in a giraffe-and-parrot-patterned case.

The Best-Case Scenario

Paul & Joe Beauté gives new meaning to accessorizing your look with these reusable lipstick cases. Outfit any of its moisturizing cream lipsticks in one of the vintage-inspired card-stock tubes; the brand introduces two limited collections per year. (For more options, check out previous designs online.) **Lipsticks,** *$20 each, and* **cases,** *$7 each, paulandjoe.us.*



TREND ALERT

What Is Co-cleansing?

Co-cleansing, short for conditioner-cleansing, is a movement that's growing in popularity among women concerned that their conventional detergent-based shampoos strip hair of its natural oils. So they're swapping out the suds for a gentle, low-lather conditioning cleanser. If you can go days between hair washes; have thick, curly hair; or stockpile cans of dry shampoo, this may be the solution you've been searching for. Try **Unwash Bio-Cleansing conditioner** ($36, *unwash.com*), or, for fine hair, **Biolage Cleansing conditioner** ($13, *biolage.com*).

Right as Rain

Did you know that tap water can contain almost as much chlorine as you'd find in a swimming pool? A simple switch will safeguard colored strands and soften skin. The **T3 Source showerhead** filters out the unnecessary chemical—a boon for brass-prone blondes and those with chronic dry skin and eczema. *$130, t3micro.com.*



Worth Its Salt

Nutritionists may advise cutting down on sodium, but when it comes to a sybaritic spa experience, we say: Bring it on! **L:A Bruket No. 001 Marigold/Orange/Geranium bath salt** turns any tub into a healing natural soak for mind and body. *$35, beautyhabit.com.*



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Melt away makeup and quench parched skin with **Jurlique Nourishing cleansing oil.** This non-greasy five-oil blend turns milky upon contact with water. *$38, jurlique.com.*



GOOD-NATURED
Burt's Bees harnessed the powers of white hibiscus and apple to tackle the unwanted effects of aging skin in its **Renewal firming night cream.** *$20, burtsbees.com.*



HYDRATION HELPER
When skin needs a kick-start, **Decléor Night Essence** doles out rare essential oils to reboot cell turnover one drop at a time. *$140 for 3 vials, decleorusa.com.*

PHOTOGRAPHS BY YASU + JUNKO, PROP STYLING BY ELIZABETH PRESS (LIPSTICKS, CONDITIONER, SHOWERHEAD); PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRYAN GARDNER (OTHERS)

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FOOD & GATHERINGS

Cook, Nourish, Enjoy



PERFECT BITE

RADISHES AND PEANUT BUTTER

The French have long tamed the sharp bite of radishes by pairing them with cool, creamy butter. We've given that classic hors d'oeuvre a boost of all-American flavor (and protein, too): Dip mild radishes, such as cherry belle, in a blend of two parts peanut butter and one part softened unsalted butter, then sprinkle with flaky sea salt. It's crisp, velvety, salty, smooth satisfaction.

PHOTOGRAPH BY LENNART WEIBULL

RECIPE AND FOOD STYLING BY GREG LOFTS



Pizza presto: Start with a whole-wheat crust, top it with cheese, and load it up with fresh vegetables.

THE WAY TO HEALTHY

It's easy to put wholesome dinners on the table when you start with healthier-than-usual ingredients. Farro makes a chewy whole-grain base for a creamy shrimp risotto, poached halibut is the star of a new take on salade Niçoise, lean chicken breasts and vegetables are steamed in parchment for tender results, and ample vegetables (asparagus, red onion, and watercress) top a whole-wheat pizza pie.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRYAN GARDNER

RECIPES AND FOOD STYLING BY SHIRA BOCAR

Halibut Salade Niçoise



Chicken and Vegetables in Parchment



Farro Risotto With Shrimp



Asparagus and Watercress Pizza



Halibut Salade Niçoise

Active Time: **45 min.** Total Time: **1 hr.** Serves: **4**

- **1 pound baby creamer potatoes, scrubbed and halved**
- **8 ounces haricots verts, trimmed**
- **2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice (from 1 lemon; reserve halves)**
- **1 teaspoon Dijon mustard**
- **2 tablespoons finely chopped shallot**
- **¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil**
- **1 tablespoon chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley**
- **Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper**
- **4 halibut fillets (5 ounces each), skin removed**
- **1 head Bibb lettuce, leaves separated**
- **½ English cucumber, halved lengthwise and sliced ½ inch thick**
- **½ cup small black olives, preferably Niçoise**

1. In a medium pot, cover potatoes with water; bring to a boil. Cook until tender, about 8 minutes. Remove potatoes. In batches, cook haricots in pot until just tender, about 3 minutes. Transfer to an ice-water bath; drain. Whisk lemon juice, mustard, and shallot in a bowl; whisk in oil, then parsley. Season with salt and pepper.

2. Bring 2 inches water to a simmer in a shallow saucepan. Season fish with salt; add to water with lemon halves. Cover; turn off heat. Let stand until fish is firm, 8 to 10 minutes. Remove fish; flake into large pieces. Arrange fish, vegetables, and olives on a platter. Season with salt and pepper, drizzle with dressing, and serve.

Chicken and Vegetables in Parchment

Active Time: **25 min.** Total Time: **45 min.** Serves: **4**

- **1 pound baby bok choy, trimmed and leaves separated**
- **12 ounces cherry tomatoes, halved**
- **1 small shallot, thinly sliced**
- **1 bunch thyme**
- **2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil**
- **Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper**
- **4 boneless, skinless chicken-breast halves (about 6 ounces each), pounded ½ inch thick**
- **¼ cup dry white wine, such as Sauvignon Blanc**

1. Preheat oven to 400° with racks in upper and lower thirds. Cut four 12-by-17-inch pieces of parchment. Fold each in half crosswise to make a crease, then unfold and lay flat. Toss together bok choy leaves, tomatoes, shallot, 1 teaspoon thyme leaves, and oil in a large bowl. Season with salt and pepper.

2. Season chicken with salt and pepper. Dividing evenly, place bok choy mixture on one side of crease on each piece of parchment, then top with chicken and 2 thyme sprigs. Drizzle each with 1 tablespoon wine. Fold parchment over, then make small overlapping pleats to seal and create half-moon-shaped packets.

3. Bake on 2 rimmed baking sheets until chicken is cooked through, 22 minutes. Transfer to plates; serve immediately, carefully cutting packets open with kitchen shears.

Farro Risotto With Shrimp

Active/Total Time: **1 hr.** Serves: **4**

- **2 cups low-sodium chicken broth**
- **2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil**
- **4 scallions, white and green parts separated and thinly sliced**
- **1½ cups pearled farro**
- **½ cup dry white wine, such as Sauvignon Blanc**
- **1 pound medium shrimp, peeled and deveined**
- **1 cup frozen peas, thawed**
- **¼ cup finely grated Parmesan**
- **¼ cup finely chopped fresh herbs, such as tarragon, chives, basil, flat-leaf parsley, or chervil, plus small whole leaves for serving**
- **Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper**

1. Bring broth and 2 cups water to a simmer in a medium saucepan. Heat oil in another medium saucepan over medium. Add scallion whites and cook, stirring frequently, until translucent, about 2 minutes. Add farro; cook, stirring constantly, until toasted, about 2 minutes. Add wine and cook, stirring, until absorbed.

2. Add ½ cup broth mixture and cook, stirring, until liquid is absorbed. Continue adding broth in this manner, ½ cup at a time, until farro is tender but still slightly firm, about 30 minutes. (You may not need all of broth.) Stir in shrimp and peas and cook until shrimp are opaque, 2 to 3 minutes. Remove from heat; stir in cheese, scallion greens, and chopped herbs. Season with salt and pepper. Divide among bowls, top with herb leaves, and serve.

Asparagus and Watercress Pizza

Active Time: **30 min.** Total Time: **55 min.** Serves: **4**

- **1 bunch asparagus, trimmed and thinly sliced on the diagonal**
- **1 small red onion, thinly sliced**
- **¼ cup plus 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil**
- **Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper**
- **1 pound store-bought pizza dough, preferably whole wheat**
- **8 ounces ricotta**
- **4 ounces mozzarella, shredded**
- **2 cups watercress or upland cress, tough stems removed**
- **Red-pepper flakes**

1. Preheat oven to 450° with rack in lower third. Toss together asparagus, onion, and 1 tablespoon oil in a medium bowl. Season with salt and pepper.

2. Brush a rimmed baking sheet with 2 tablespoons oil. Using your hands, gently stretch dough from all sides to approximate size of baking sheet. Place dough on baking sheet, stretching and fitting it to edges of sheet.

3. Brush dough with remaining 2 tablespoons oil, then spread with ricotta, leaving a ½-inch border. Top with asparagus mixture; sprinkle with mozzarella.

4. Bake until crust is golden brown and asparagus is tender, about 20 minutes. Top with watercress, season with salt, and sprinkle with pepper flakes. Cut into pieces and serve.

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In this casual family-style seder, everything—relish, salad, and main course—is served together.

RITUALS, REFRESHED

The Passover feast, or seder (from the Hebrew word for "order"), is centered on many symbolic foods—such as unleavened bread (matzo) and dessert, haroset, and bitter greens, among others. In that vein, our menu features those items along with a host of Middle Eastern flavors. We put the emphasis on ease of preparation, to allow you more time with friends and family.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEPHEN KENT JOHNSON

MENU

Herb Relish (Schug) and Matzo

Haroset-Stuffed Hens With Gravy and Sweet Potatoes

Bitter-Greens Salad

Passover Chocolate-Walnut Cake With Orange

BOWL, 9", IN SPALTED AMBROSIA, *SPENCERPETERMAN.COM*; DAISY NAPKIN, IN INDIGO, *LESINDIENNES.COM*; VICTOR DINNER PLATE, BY ASTIER DE VILLATTE, *ABCHOME.COM*

oh. my. fudge.





Soft, chewy cookie on the outside.
Crazy, delicious fudge on the inside. Booyah.



Little stuffed Cornish hens (each one split to serve two guests) make a lovely alternative to one large roast.

Tastes of Tradition

Matzo, an unleavened flatbread, reminds us of the Jews' hurried flight from Egypt. According to tradition, there was no time to wait for dough to rise, so it was carried into the desert, where the harsh sun baked it into a cracker-like texture. (And since it is forbidden to eat standard flours during Passover, matzo is also often used in desserts, as with the chocolate cake here.)

Haroset, a mixture of apples or other fruit, nuts, and spices, signifies both the hardships of slavery (its texture evokes the bricks and mortar used by the Israelites) and the sweetness of liberation. While it's commonly served as a condiment (much like chutney), haroset flavors the stuffing tucked into the Cornish hens in our menu.

Although the **bitter herb** at the seder table—meant to symbolize the bitterness of slavery—is often horseradish or romaine lettuce, in the Sephardic (or Mediterranean) Jewish tradition, it can also be an assertive green, one with bite. Hence we included an herb relish made with parsley and cilantro, as well as a salad composed of escarole, radicchio, and frisée.

HERB RELISH (SCHUG) AND MATZO

Active/Total Time: **10 min.**
Serves: **8**

This traditional Yemeni relish is served throughout the year, as an accompaniment to roasted meats and vegetables and as a spread for falafel and other sandwiches.

- **1 jalapeño, halved (ribs and seeds removed for less heat, if desired)**
- **1 clove garlic, smashed**
- **1 bunch flat-leaf parsley, leaves and stems cut into 2-inch pieces (2 packed cups)**
- **1 bunch cilantro, leaves and stems cut into 2-inch pieces (2 packed cups)**
- **Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper**
- **¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for drizzling**
- **Matzo sheets, for serving**

Pulse jalapeño and garlic in a food processor until finely chopped. Add herbs, season with salt and pepper, and pulse until finely chopped. With motor running, slowly add oil, processing until mixture resembles a loose paste. Serve in a bowl, with matzo.

HAROSET-STUFFED HENS WITH GRAVY AND SWEET POTATOES

Active Time: **40 min.**
Total Time: **1 hr. 30 min.**
Serves: **8**

Serve the hens with roasted sweet potatoes: Prick four sweet potatoes all over with a fork and rub the skins with extra-virgin olive oil. Place a large ovenproof skillet, preferably cast iron, on the floor of the oven while it is preheating. Roast the potatoes in the skillet, turning them a few times, for 45 to 55 minutes. (This gives the spuds a blistered, crispy skin.) Halve the potatoes lengthwise just before serving them.

HENS

- **Extra-virgin olive oil, for drizzling and for hens**
- **4 Cornish game hens (1½ to 2 pounds each), room temperature, patted dry**
- **Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper**
- **2 Granny Smith apples, cored and coarsely chopped**
- **2 matzo sheets, broken into pieces**
- **¾ cup walnuts, toasted and coarsely chopped**
- **½ cup raisins**
- **¾ teaspoon ground cinnamon**
- **⅓ cup kosher-for-Passover sweet wine, such as Manischewitz**

GRAVY

- **1¾ cups low-sodium chicken broth**
- **1 tablespoon potato starch**

1. Hens: Preheat oven to 400°. Drizzle a heavy-duty rimmed baking sheet or large, shallow roasting pan with oil.

RECIPES AND FOOD STYLING BY GREG LOFTS; COBALT BLOOMS PLATTER, *SHOPTERRAIN.COM*

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Serving suggestion © 2015 R&R Foods

2. Rub cavities and skin of hens with oil, then season with salt and pepper. In a large bowl, toss together apples, matzo, walnuts, raisins, cinnamon, and wine. Season with salt and pepper. Divide stuffing evenly among body and neck cavities of hens. Tie legs together with kitchen twine.

3. Transfer hens to prepared baking sheet. Roast until a thermometer inserted into thickest part of breasts (without touching bone) registers 165°, 45 to 55 minutes. Transfer hens to a carving board; let rest 15 minutes.

4. Gravy: Meanwhile, in a small bowl, whisk together ¼ cup broth and potato starch. Place baking sheet over 2 burners and stir remaining 1½ cups broth into pan drippings. Bring mixture to a simmer over medium-high, scraping up browned bits from bottom. Slowly whisk in potato-starch mixture and simmer, stirring constantly, until gravy is thickened slightly, about 1 minute. Strain through a sieve.

5. Remove twine and cut hens in half lengthwise. Serve, with gravy.

BITTER-GREENS SALAD

Active/Total Time: **15 min.**
Serves: **8**

- **1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon white-wine vinegar**
- **3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil**
- **½ teaspoon sugar**
- **Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper**
- **1 head escarole, cored and thinly sliced crosswise**
- **1 large head frisée, cored and torn into bite-size pieces**
- **6 heads radicchio, cored and thinly sliced**

In a large bowl, whisk together vinegar, oil, and sugar. Season with salt and pepper. Add greens and toss just before serving.

PASSOVER CHOCOLATE-WALNUT CAKE WITH ORANGE

Active Time: **40 min.**
Total Time: **2 hr. 5 min.**
Serves: **8**



Stiffly beaten egg whites give loft to this unleavened cake. The delicious toppings make it feel celebratory.

CAKE

- **¾ cup safflower oil, plus more for pan**
- **1 cup matzo meal**
- **1 cup walnuts, toasted and finely ground**
- **¾ cup sugar**
- **1 teaspoon ground cinnamon**
- **½ teaspoon coarse salt**
- **Grated zest of 1 large orange, plus ¼ cup fresh juice**
- **3 large eggs, separated, plus 3 large egg whites**
- **3 ounces semisweet chocolate, coarsely chopped (½ cup)**

SERVING

- **1 ounce semisweet chocolate, melted**
- **5 very thin orange rounds**
- **⅓ cup walnuts, toasted and coarsely chopped**

1. Cake: Preheat oven to 350°. Brush bottom and sides of an 8-inch square cake pan with oil. Line bottom with parchment, leaving a 2-inch overhang on 2 sides. Brush parchment with oil.

2. In a large bowl, whisk together matzo meal, ground walnuts, sugar, cinnamon, salt, and zest. Stir in oil, egg yolks, and orange juice.

3. In a mixing bowl, beat egg whites on low speed until foamy, 1 minute. Increase speed to high; beat just until stiff (but not dry) peaks form, 1 to 2 minutes more. Stir one-third of whites into batter, then fold in chopped chocolate. Gently fold in remaining whites (do not overmix). Transfer batter to prepared pan.

4. Bake until cake is golden on top and springs back when lightly pressed, 25 to 30 minutes. Let cool in pan 10 minutes. Remove cake using parchment and transfer to a wire rack; let cool completely.

5. Serving: Place cake on a platter. Drizzle with melted chocolate; top with orange rounds and walnuts.

Save one for the Easter bunny. If you can.



Philadelphia® Easter Mini Cheesecakes

Prep Time: 20 min. | Total Time: 3 hrs. 20 min. incl. refrigeration | Makes: 18 servings

- *1* cup graham cracker crumbs
- *3/4* cup plus 2 Tbsp. sugar, divided
- *3* Tbsp. butter, melted
- *3* pkg. Philadelphia® Cream Cheese (8 oz. each), softened
- *1* tsp. vanilla
- *3* eggs
- *1* cup plus 2 Tbsp. coconut
- *54* speckled chocolate eggs

HEAT oven to 325°F.
MIX graham crumbs, 2 Tbsp. sugar and butter; press into the bottoms of 18 paper lined muffin cups.
BEAT cream cheese, vanilla and remaining sugar with mixer until smooth.
ADD eggs, 1 at a time, mixing on low speed after each just until blended. Spoon over crusts.
BAKE 25 to 30 minutes or until centers are almost set. Cool completely. Refrigerate for 2 hours.
TOP each cheesecake with 1 Tbsp. toasted coconut shaped into a nest. Fill each nest with 3 speckled chocolate eggs.



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Ravishing Radishes

It's time to think outside the salad bowl—and beyond red and round—when it comes to the mighty *Raphanus sativus*. This under-the-radar root vegetable grows in a range of colors, sizes, and flavors and, while delightful raw, can also be excellent when cooked. Here are 10 varieties to get to know, and a few surprising ways to enjoy them.

PHOTOGRAPH BY LINDA PUGLIESE

1
WHITE ICICLE

Mildly pungent with peppery undertones, the slender white icicle tastes terrific raw—try grating it into a slaw with Asian flavorings. Grilling or roasting will bring out its inherent sweetness.

2
ROUND BLACK

Also known as the black Spanish round, this large, dramatic winter radish has flesh that is crisp, white, and usually quite peppery. A hardy dipper, the round black can also be creamed like its close relative, the turnip.

3
PINK BEAUTY

If you're not a fan of the bite that is the calling card of many a radish, try this sweet variety. It's as versatile as its more familiar red cousin but milder, making it a natural for tea sandwiches with fresh ricotta and lemon zest or chives.

4
CINCINNATI MARKET

Its tapered shape and crimson skin have earned this heirloom the nickname "long scarlet." Its spiciness works particularly well in tacos, tortas, and other Mexican dishes.

5
CHERRY BELLE

There's a good reason this small red globe has become the embodiment of "radish": It's an all-purpose wonder that works for dipping (see page 43 for one idea), layering into sandwiches, or roasting.

6
PURPLE PLUM

Mild, sweet, and regally hued, the petite purple plum is a prince among radishes. It stays fresh longer than many varieties, and the stark contrast between its vibrant skin and white flesh makes it a standout any way you slice it.

7
SNOW BELLE

The spicy white snow belle (also called snowball) has a uniform creamy shade inside and out. It pairs especially well with rich foods like cream, butter, and avocado.

8
ZLATA

A native of eastern Europe (*zlata* means "gold" in Czech), this spring and summer radish is juicy and medium-spicy. Delicious raw, it is even better when braised (less bite, more sweetness).

9
WATERMELON

Like its namesake, this heirloom radish is large, sweet, and gorgeous beneath its plain skin. It makes a lovely garnish, quick pickle, or addition to a cheese plate (try it with feta or chèvre) alongside fresh fruit.

10
FRENCH BREAKFAST

These heirlooms (also known as flambeaux) are mild, sweet, and crunchy—just right for slicing and enjoying on a buttered baguette, à la française. They are also delicious sautéed or stir-fried.





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These cookies are delightfully crisp (thanks to cornmeal), sweet, and shot through with chewy raisins and soft milk-chocolate chunks.

CORNMEAL CHOCOLATE-CHUNK COOKIES WITH RAISINS AND FENNEL SEEDS

Active Time: **25 min.**
Total Time: **1 hr. 15 min.**
Makes: **3 dozen**

- **1½ sticks unsalted butter, room temperature**
- **1 cup sugar**
- **1 tablespoon fennel seeds, toasted and finely ground**
- **1 large egg**
- **1 cup all-purpose flour**
- **⅔ cup medium-grind yellow cornmeal**
- **1 teaspoon baking powder**
- **¾ teaspoon coarse salt**
- **¾ cup golden raisins**
- **5 ounces coarsely chopped milk chocolate (1¼ cups)**

1. Preheat oven to 350°. In a large bowl, beat butter with sugar and fennel seeds on medium-high speed until light and creamy, about 3 minutes. Beat in egg until combined. Add flour, cornmeal, baking powder, and salt and beat just until combined. Stir in raisins and chocolate.

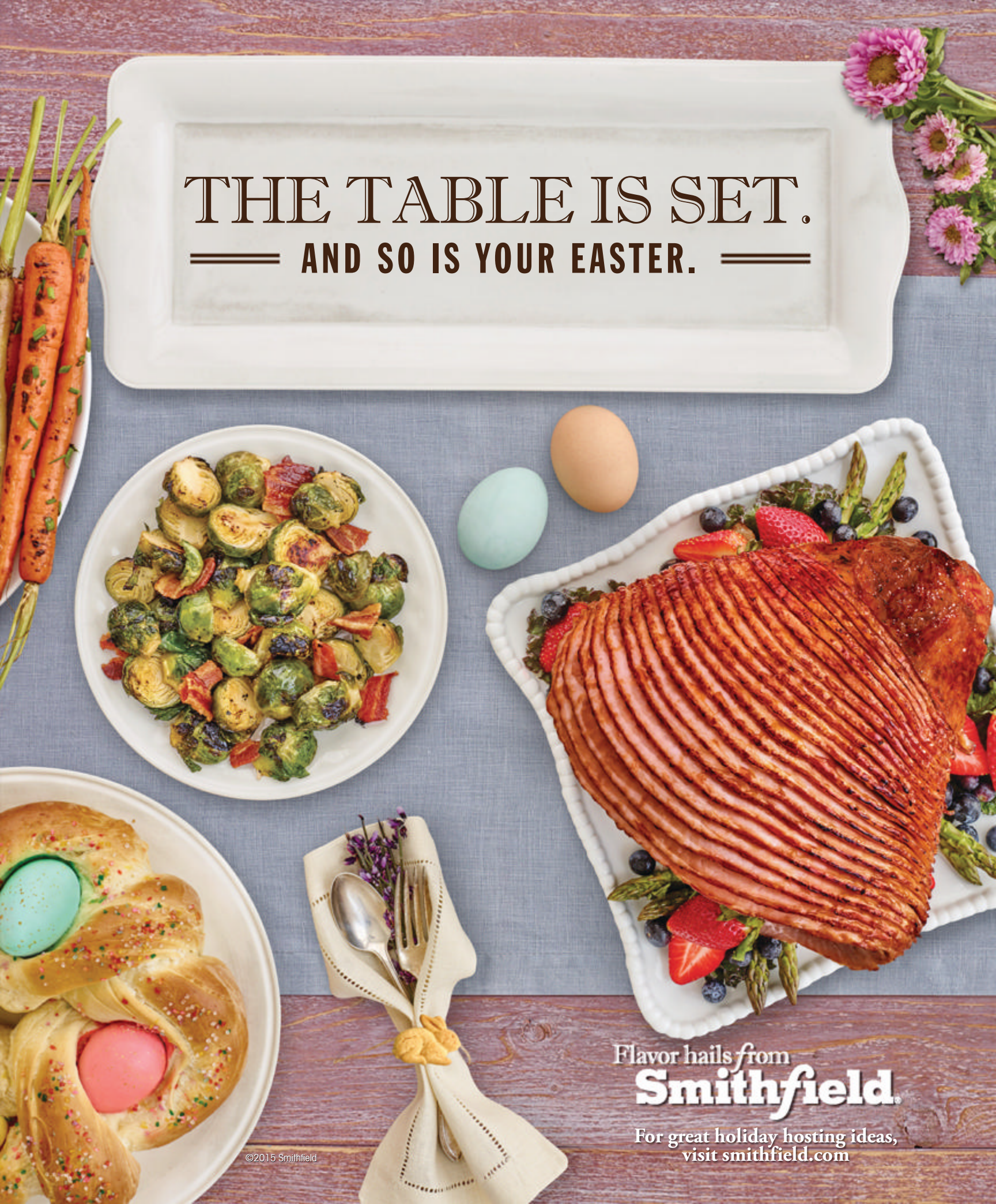
2. Scoop heaping tablespoons of dough (or use a 1½-inch ice cream scoop) onto parchment-lined baking sheets, about 2 inches apart. Bake, rotating sheets once, until edges are golden, about 15 minutes. Let cool on sheets on wire racks at least 10 minutes before serving warm or at room temperature. Cooled completely, cookies can be stored at room temperature up to 3 days.

CHIP OFF THE OLD (CHOCOLATE) BLOCK

Inspired by the celebrated semolina loaf with golden raisins and fennel seeds at Amy's Bread, in New York City, food editorial director Jennifer Aaronson created this cookie, an instant test-kitchen favorite. (She added chopped milk chocolate to the dough for good measure.) But don't just take our word for it; bake a batch and taste the extraordinary mix of flavors and textures for yourself.

PHOTOGRAPH BY BRYAN GARDNER

RECIPE BY JENNIFER AARONSON


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GOOD LIVING

TABLEAU

UP CLOSE AND BEAUTIFUL

This month, clip some tree blossoms and bring them indoors, where you're more apt to enjoy them at eye level. Magnolias in full bloom, with their large, silky petals and pink tones, are especially striking (trim the stems short so the flowers get as much water as possible), but a branch of buds is also lovely. Just be sure to place the arrangements in a spot where you can take some time to linger—and smell the flowers.

PHOTOGRAPH BY PETRA BINDEL











ALL DECKED OUT

With warm weather around the corner, now's the time to consider adding a deck to your outdoor space, or replacing an old one that's splintered or warped. Read through our primer on the different decking materials available—from traditional woods to engineered boards—to determine what works best for your needs.

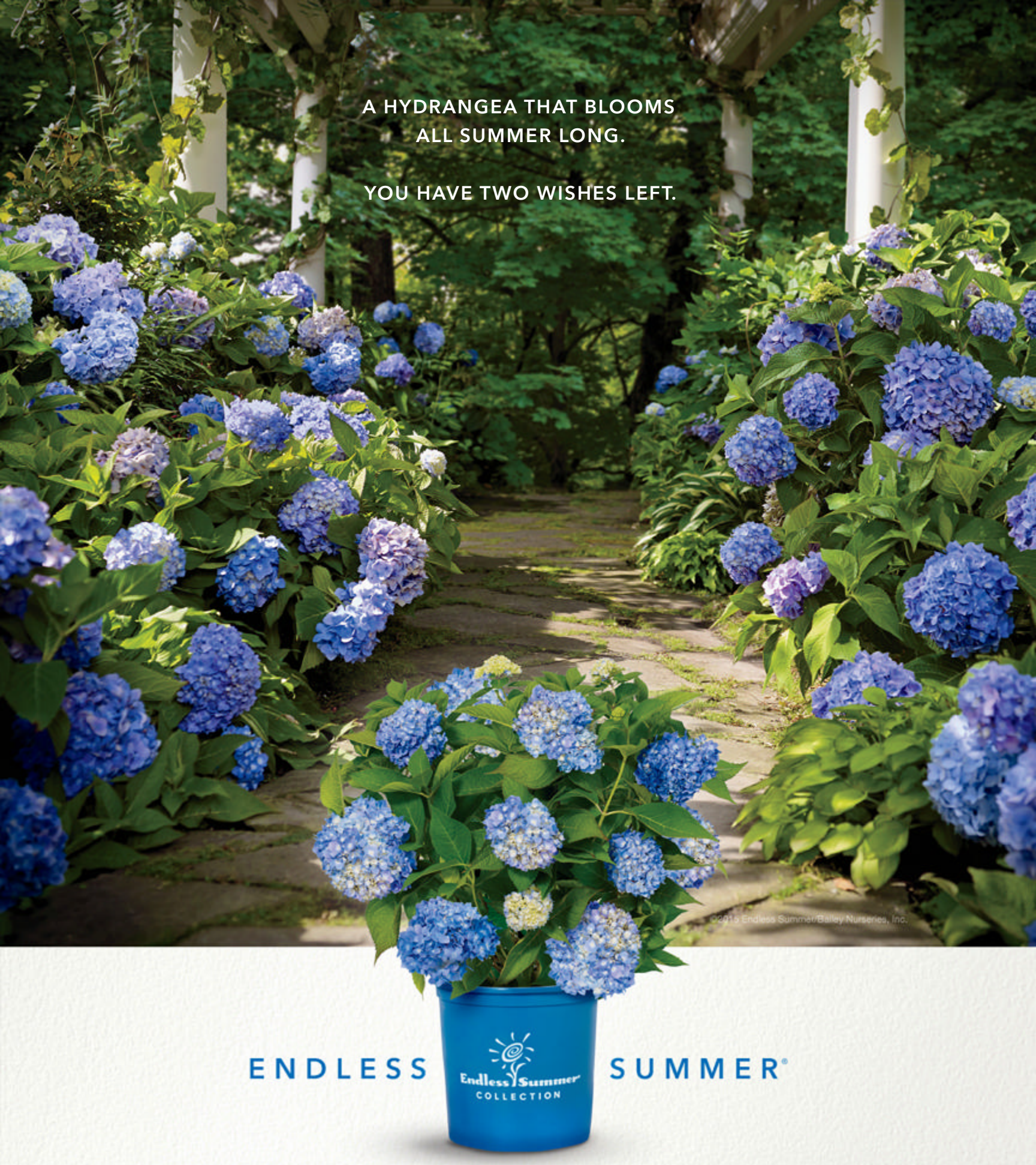
A deck may not have four walls, but when it's warm outside, it may be your most popular "room." Adding one to any home is an investment (the average cost of a wooden deck runs close to $10,000) but well worth it in the long run: According to a recent poll of realtors, such additions outperform all indoor remodeling projects when it comes to resale value.

All the more reason, then, to fully research the pros and cons of various decking materials—wood, composite (a mix of wood and plastic), plastic (PVC), and aluminum. Personal taste is obviously a consideration, but so is your budget. "If you were to buy composite or plastic over cedar, you'd be paying 40 to 50 percent more," says Ron Spillers, owner of West Coast Decks, in Seattle.

Real wood has the advantage of natural good looks, but keep in mind that it needs to be restained or repainted every few years. Manufactured decking, on the other hand, is low-maintenance but has a synthetic look.

If you reside in a sunny region, synthetic decking may be the smartest option, as wooden decks can take a beating from constant UV exposure. And if wildfires are a concern, you may be forced to use only noncombustible materials, like aluminum, in order to be code-compliant. So be sure to do your research, starting with the guide to popular decking materials on the next page—and consider your investment wisely.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: WILLIAM WALDRON/THE INTERIOR ARCHIVE; THOMAS LOOF/TRUNK ARCHIVE; COSTAS PICADAS/DLUX IMAGES; LISA ROMEREIN/OTTO


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BOARD APPROVAL



MATERIAL: WOOD

1. Black Locust

An increasingly popular hardwood, it's naturally rot- and insect-resistant and "can last 20-plus years," says Al Terry, president and CEO of New York Decks, in New York City. **PRO** Black locust is sustainable and domestically grown. **CON** It's a hardwood but not as dense (and thus durable) as others like ipe (see below) and teak. *blacklocustlumber.com.*

2. Ipe

An exotic hardwood, ipe (pronounced *EE-pay*) is prized for its virtually knot-free appearance and natural durability. **PRO** Its rich color is similar to that of teak, a more expensive hardwood. **CON** The imported wood can cost as much as man-made decking materials. And because the trees are slow-growing, it's not the most environmental option. *advantagelumber.com.*

3. Pressure-Treated Pine

The softwood is treated with preservatives to ward off decay, fungus, and termites. **PRO** It's widely available at lumberyards and home centers across the country. **CON** The wood is saturated during treatment and can take several months to dry; as the planks dry, they can shrink and warp. *homedepot.com.*

4. Cedar

Plentiful in the Pacific Northwest, cedar "is a good choice for those who want to be environmentally sensitive and budget-minded," says Spillers. **PRO** Light in comparison with hardwoods like ipe, it's easier to work with. **CON** Because cedar is an untreated softwood, it can easily scar. *homedepot.com.*

MATERIAL: COMPOSITE

5. & 6. Timbertech Earthwood Evolutions' Legacy Collection and Trex Transcend

All composite decking is made up of wood and recycled plastics. "Encapsulated" composites have a polymer coating that makes them stain- and scratch-resistant. Aside from cleaning with soap and water or a pressure washer, they require little maintenance. **PRO** Unlike regular composite decking, encapsulated types won't fade in color, which means you can easily match and replace a damaged board. **CON** Like all engineered options, they can't be painted; you are limited to the colors offered by the manufacturer. *Earthwood, timbertech.com. Trex Transcend, homedepot.com.*

MATERIAL: PVC

7. Azek Arbor Collection

This lightweight decking is entirely plastic (polyvinyl chloride). Resistant to mold, termites, and rotting, it's a great option for high-traffic outdoor areas. **PRO** The product is virtually maintenance-free. **CON** PVC looks and feels like faux wood. It can also get extremely hot in the sun, and so may not be ideal for desert climates. *azek.com.*

MATERIAL: ALUMINUM

8. Versadeck Versaplank

Popular in areas that have strict fire-related building codes, aluminum decking is the only option that can achieve a watertight seal between planks. **PRO** It's cool underfoot and highly fire-resistant. **CON** If you want the look of wood, this isn't for you. Also, aluminum is pricier than all other decking materials. *versadeck.com.*

MAKE IT LAST

Should you decide to build a wooden deck, expect to schedule regular reapplications of a protective finish—according to Terry, every year for a semitransparent stain, every three years for a solid stain, and every five to seven years for paint. For a deck that gets a lot of sun, avoid transparent stains, which offer little UV protection. Painting the wood is a better option, as it offers the most coverage, provided you use high-quality outdoor paint with UV protection.

PHOTOGRAPH BY YASU + JUNKO; PROP STYLING BY ELIZABETH PRESS



SPRING AWAKENING

From prepping beds to planting seedlings, there's much to keep you busy in the garden this time of year. The handy items on this page should help nourish, replenish, and embellish your garden.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRYAN GARDNER



Tip of the Hat
A return to the garden means more time in the sun. Shield your face from damaging UV rays with this wide-brimmed handwoven palm hat, featuring a cloth sweatband and an adjustable leather chin strap. *$38, tulahats.com.*



Helping Hands
These supple, washable, and thorn-resistant goatskin gloves are made especially for women. *$36, womanswork.com.*



Rest Easy
The egg-shaped kneeler's shock-absorbing memory foam can help take the ache out of gardening. ***By Burgon & Ball, $35, gardentoolcompany.com.***



Touch and Go
With an easy-to-use one-touch lever, this 30-inch wand makes watering hard-to-reach areas a cinch. *By Dramm, $28, amazon.com.*



Cut to Size
Gardeners at New York City's High Line keep these extra-sharp folding pocket saws in their pruning-tool kits. Proceeds benefit the park. *By Silky Saws, $42, thehighline.org.*





Drain and Contain
A handy addition to the versatile Tubtrug, the colander nests inside and can be used to hose down tools and produce. *Tubtrug, 7 gal., $15, and colander, $15, gardeners.com.*

Designer Labels
Write each plant's name on one of these standout orange powder-coated aluminum tags. A white grease **pencil is included.** ***$15 for 4, ebay.com/americanmade/scout-regalia.***



The tag is reusable! Just wipe it clean with rubbing alcohol.



Buckets of Rain
Reduce your water consumption (and bill) by capturing rain in an eco-friendly repurposed barrel that holds 60 gallons of water that you can use on your landscape. *$119, greatamericanrainbarrel.com.*

Dress Blues
Protect your clothes while you play in the dirt with a soft denim apron that, like a favorite pair of jeans, only gets better with wear. *By Joe's Jeans for Edible Gardens LA, $98, ediblegardensla.com.*



Heaven Scent
Plant some tuberose bulbs in a pot now for intoxicatingly fragrant flowers this summer. (The scent is often used in perfumes.) *By Martha Stewart Living, $10 for 4, homedepot.com.*

MIKE KRAUTTER (TAG)

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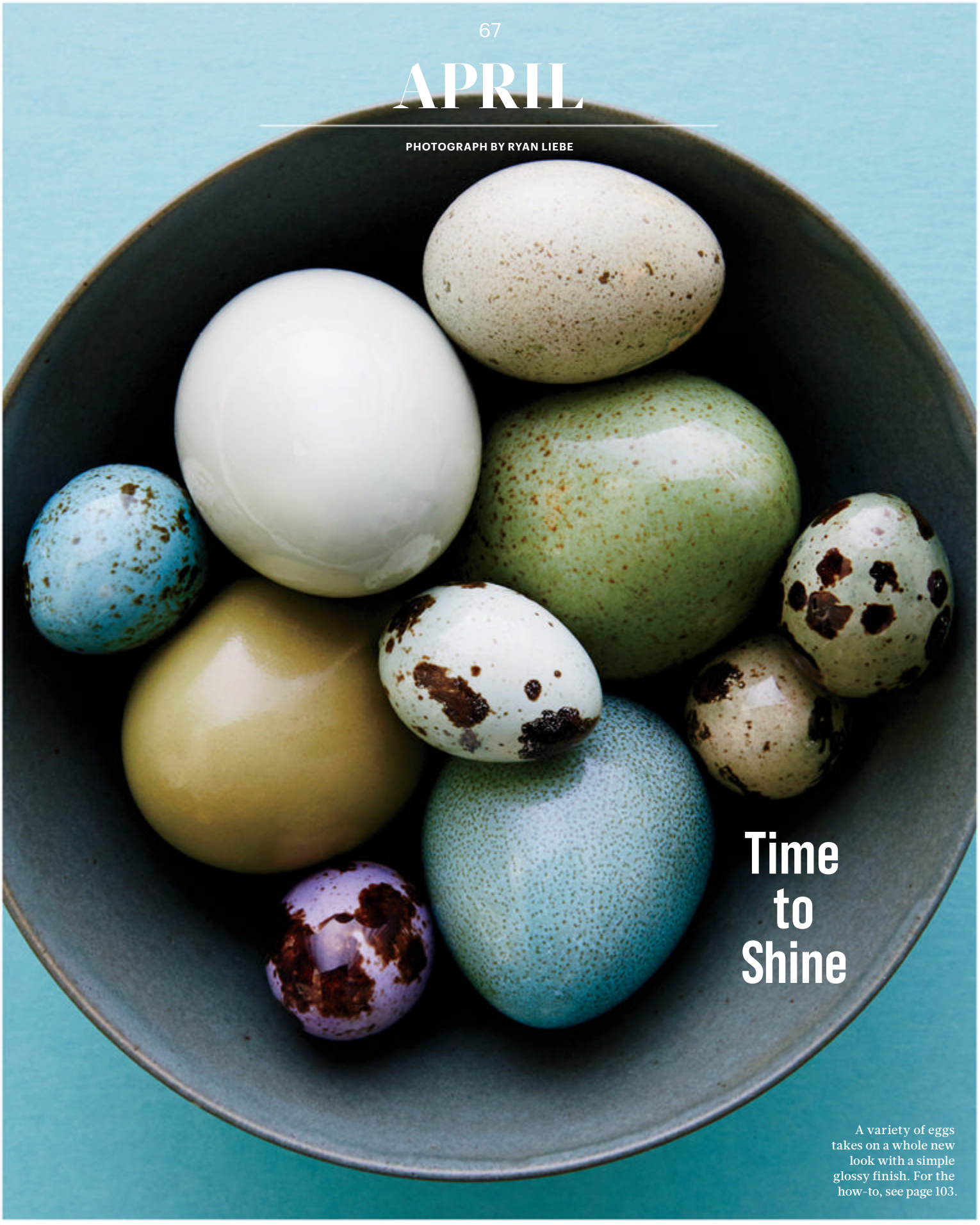


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PHOTOGRAPH BY RYAN LIEBE



Time to Shine

A variety of eggs takes on a whole new look with a simple glossy finish. For the how-to, see page 103.



DYED *EGGS* *in* A DRAMATIC DISPLAY

A massive shallow basket (it's three feet long!) filled with finely shredded paper is an expansive "nest" for circles of green and purple eggs. For the deepest shades, Martha started with dark-brown eggs. She also covered a collection of mismatched baskets with green spray paint; the children use them for gathering additional eggs hidden outside.

Tray basket *(similar to shown), hancockbaskets.com.* **Kraft-paper shred,** *papermart.com.*

>> For these egg-dye color formulas, go to *marthastewart.com/marthas-eggs.*

SHADES OF SPRING



A PEEK INSIDE MARTHA'S HOUSE ON EASTER

"Tradition with a twist" is how Martha describes this year's decorations. It all begins with the color palette—not the expected pale pastels but a more vibrant pairing of purples and greens. See how she uses these hues, and then get cracking on your own celebration.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY **RYAN LIEBE** | PORTRAIT BY **MARCUS NILSSON**



A BASKET BRIMMING *with* BEAUTIFUL BLOOMS

Spring flowers and foliage—their lush ruffles overflowing an antique Japanese basket—are an exuberant centerpiece. Against the green of the hellebores and geranium leaves, purple tulips and sprightly fritillaria look all the more jewel-like. The flower stems are anchored in floral foam, which has been carved to fit inside a plastic liner in the basket. Decorating director Kevin Sharkey often comes up early to help Martha with flowers for parties, and this one was no exception.

It's no secret that Martha does holidays in a big way. For Easter, that means decorating the house with baskets, blooms, bunnies, and more; dyeing hundreds of eggs; and making cookies by the dozen. "It was one o'clock in the morning and I was still decorating cookies," she says of her most recent preparations. "My entire kitchen was covered with colored sugars!"

Her late-night efforts are appreciated on Easter morning by the family members, friends, and neighbors she's invited for brunch. The gathering is an annual event with traditions that everyone looks forward to, but that doesn't mean it's always the same. This year, Martha was inspired by the deep purples and bright greens of flowers in her garden. She planned her decorations and dyed eggs around that palette, which is still springlike but also surprising and sophisticated.

The egg hunt is the highlight of the day. Make that egg *hunts*—Martha has figured out that having two makes for happier hunters. There's one field simply strewn with eggs for the toddlers to find, and another with the treasures hidden in more challenging spots for older children to discover. "I've been doing this for so many years," she says. "And I'll continue to do it—especially as long as there are kids." Indeed, her grandchildren, Jude and Truman, are two of those eager to fill their baskets and come across the coveted golden egg, the finder of which is rewarded with a giant chocolate bunny.

HAIR BY KATSU NAKAMURA; MAKEUP BY DAISY SCHWARTZBERG



COOKIE ARRANGEMENT

Martha makes extra cookies to display. To stand up the cookies, prop a few large ones against small clear glasses, adhering them to the glasses and the cake stand with dots of royal icing. Lean smaller cookies against the anchored ones. Add green jelly beans and malted egg candies all around.

EGGS & BUNNIES *made* EXTRA-SWEET

Cutout cookies decorated with royal icing and colored sanding sugars are welcome at any celebration. Martha's brown-sugar cookies also happen to be easy to make assembly-line-style. For the ones with white and colored dots, pipe on some dots and let the icing dry. Then pipe on more dots and sprinkle them with colored sanding sugar while they're still wet. For the cookies coated in icing, Martha didn't pipe them at all—she dipped them into a shallow dish of icing before sugaring.

>> For recipe, see page 121.

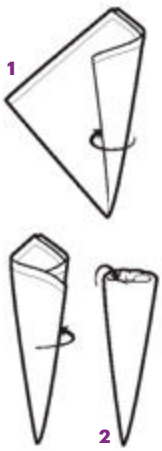


A TABLE SET --with-- WHIMSY AND ELEGANCE

Martha's guests gather at this farm-themed table. Eggs from her chickens and other types of birds are nestled in cabbage-leaf place mats. Antique faience lettuce plates and vintage Royal Copenhagen dinnerware from Martha's collection continue the color scheme. Crepe-paper leaves sprout from napkins rolled to resemble purple carrots. Small arrangements of parrot tulips and hyacinths dot the table.

Ostrich eggs, *uniquelyemu.com*. **Other eggs,** *ebay.com/americanmade/naked-eggs*. **Cabbage-leaf place mats,** *grandinroad.com*.

NAPKIN HOW-TO



1. Fold a square napkin in half, then in half again, forming a smaller square. Roll napkin into a narrow cone.
2. Tuck ends in. Use our template (at *marthastewart.com/carrot-napkin*) to cut out leaf shapes from green crepe paper. Roll and tuck them into open end.

AN EASTER BUNNY --as-- A FANCIFUL PLANTER

Look who's hopped onto Martha's porch, having filled his basket with flowers and foliage. The bunny's stonelike look is actually courtesy of a coating of sand over a ceramic planter (for the how-to, see page 21).

Planter *(similar to shown), thesunshineshed.com*.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY BROWN BIRD DESIGN

JUST ADD (LESS) WATER

When a couple wanted to reduce the water consumption in their Southern California garden, they turned to landscape designer Judy M. Horton. Here, she shares the best practices for creating a beautiful, water-wise garden, wherever you live.

photographs by
LISA ROMEREIN

text by
MELISSA OZAWA





In an area that was once lawn, Horton planted a grove of California sycamores along with the native *Heuchera maxima*, which blooms profusely in spring. Next to the grove, she created a bed with two kinds of lavender, rosemary, and sculpted balls of germander (*Teucrium fruticosa*).



NO.1

RETHINK THE LAWN

In its need for water, a lawn is similar to a gas-guzzling car. Horton removed most of it here, leaving only a portion in the backyard. In its place she expanded the planting beds, and she gave the remaining lawn a new shape by adding trees and low-water plants, such as *Rosmarinus officinalis prostratus* 'Boule.' The fuchsia-flowering succulent *Calandrinia spectabilis* grows beneath a fruitless olive tree (*Olea europaea* 'Majestic Beauty').



NO.2

CREATE A LOW-WATER TAPESTRY

Horton knew she wanted to keep the area that was once lawn low and flat, so she planned a tapestry garden of low-growing water-wise plants, including thyme, Santa Barbara daisies, and *Echeveria* 'Hens and Chicks,' that will weave together as they mature in gravel. She also threw in a handful of taller "wild-card plants," scattering poppy and cardoon seeds "for drama."

Faced with skyrocketing water bills, Donivee and Merrill Nash were forced to rethink their home's plantings—and Donivee couldn't have been happier. "I had been waiting for years for an excuse to put in a garden," she says. "We had a nice yard, but it wasn't a real garden." So they hired Judy M. Horton (*jmhgardendesign.com*), a Los Angeles–based landscape designer and a fellow board trustee at the Los Angeles Arboretum Foundation, to create a beautiful but more climate-appropriate (read: water-wise) landscape.

Horton reduced the footprint of the thirstiest plants growing on the property—in other words, the lawn and the roses. Removing more than 10,000 square feet of lawn was "a no-brainer," she said. But Donivee also had a rose collection that she was quite fond of. "I thought it was a brave move to say, 'Okay, you can take out most of the roses in the back,'" Horton recalls. She then set about designing a garden that celebrated the landscaping advantages the Nashes already had—an existing hardscape and a great selection of mature trees—and presented the couple with a new, more unified vision. Horton chose purple, pink, white, gray, and silver low-water Mediterranean-climate plants, including lavender, rosemary, germander, and olive. She also planted more than 20 new trees, including a grove of native California sycamores underplanted with spring-flowering heuchera, and added hundreds of white-blooming anemones, resplendent in autumn, to the existing birch grove. To replace the panels of lawn she had removed by the house, she laid down pea gravel as a mulch and created a romantic tapestry garden in one area and a formal olive-tree terrace by the master bedroom.

Six years after Horton's plan was put into place, the water bills have indeed been reduced. "Installing a water-saving garden is a long-term project," Donivee says. (New plants, even low-water ones, can require some supplemental watering until established.) In addition to reducing their water consumption, the couple has also gone organic. "One of the exciting rewards is the natural life that has come into the garden," says Horton. In summer, monarch butterflies arrive in full force to feast on milkweed. "You can't go a day without seeing one," says Donivee. And while the Nashes entertain outdoors frequently—hosting cocktail parties and garden tours—Donivee's favorite time "is just sitting in the garden," she says. "It is one of my greatest pleasures."

NO.3

BE CLIMATE-CONSCIOUS

Horton recommends growing regionally appropriate plants: those that are native to your area or have similar growing requirements to those of natives, and that will thrive on natural rainfall. At the Nashes', she planted the drought-tolerant succulent *Calandrinia spectabilis*, which can bloom profusely from spring through fall, alongside a low, wide clipped hedge of the Australian native *Westringia fruticosa*.





NO.4

CONSIDER GRAVEL

A classic design element in France and Italy, gravel occurs naturally and provides good drainage for plants while suppressing weeds. Horton used pea gravel as the base for a formal grid of four olive trees. As a focal point, she placed an armillary sphere in the middle and surrounded it with spring-blooming bearded irises. In the foreground, Spanish lavender complements them; a hedge of westringia provides a clean backdrop.



NO.5

PLANT TREES

"While trees need regular water initially, they are far less thirsty than a lawn and don't need much water once established," says Horton. Plus, they create cool, shady areas, which helps with water needs in the long term. Horton added more than 20 trees to the Nashes' garden, including California sycamores, olives, and birch trees, shown here. To complement the white bark of the birches, she underplanted them with the Japanese anemone 'Honorine Jobert,' which blooms in fall.

Produced by Melissa Ozawa

WATER-WISE AND WONDERFUL

"An important lesson is to garden where you live," says Horton, who strives to use only plants that will thrive where she's designing. Knowing your growing conditions will help you select the right plants. Lucky for you, there's a wide range of low-water plants available in all regions of the country, for every style of garden. These tough beauties should be able to handle some drought with aplomb.

HENS AND CHICKS

These low-growing succulents feature compact rosettes of leaves and require very little maintenance. Hardy to Zone 4, they do well both in pots and in the landscape (even in poor soil), where they will propagate freely by runners.

MULLEIN

Providing a strong vertical accent to a garden bed, this Mediterranean self-seeder prefers full sun and will grow in dry, rocky soils. The cultivar 'Southern Charm,' *below,* can reach three feet in height and should produce blooms from late spring through early summer.

ERYNGIUM

Also known as sea holly, this low-maintenance perennial thrives in hot, dry areas. Its thistlelike foliage (the silvery-blue bracts resemble petals) and flowers (the center cones) should keep their shape through fall.

THYME

With fragrant foliage and pale-purple flowers in summer, this culinary herb can handle some foot traffic and provide a soft ground cover in a tapestry garden. It prefers well-drained soil and is hardy to Zone 5.



GAURA

Native to the southern U.S., this deer-resistant and sun-loving perennial will attract butterflies to its wispy spikes of white summer flowers. While it can handle some humidity, gaura does best in sandy, well-drained soil.

CATMINT

Fuss-free and strong, catmint (or nepeta) is a member of the mint family and features fragrant foliage and long-lasting flowers. The popular purple-flowered cultivar 'Walker's Low' is especially hardy, tolerating the toughest of growing conditions.

ARTEMISIA

Deer- and rabbit-tolerant, this woody shrub is grown for its unusual fine-textured, silvery foliage. A beautiful bedding plant, artemisia likes full sun and looks radiant in a moon garden.

AGASTACHE

Attractive to pollinators, agastache (or hummingbird mint) is a showy perennial herb that has many cultivars and flower colors, including pink, orange, red, and purple. Once established, these deer-resistant plants prefer deep but infrequent watering.



Salt-Crusted Leg of Lamb
A few simple steps ensure that every bite of this roast is tender, juicy, and infused with the heady flavors of herbs and lemon. Begin by broiling the lamb, caramelizing the exterior to enhance its texture and taste. Next, coat it with herb oil. Finally, pack a thick layer of salt all over the lamb; as the meat roasts, the salt crust keeps it moist and leaves it perfectly seasoned—but not salty.

1

Choose a Main Course

Start here, with the centerpiece of the meal. Leg of lamb and salmon are both seasonal favorites, but our renditions—like the other dishes on these pages—have been given a few fresh tweaks. Each is assertively flavored with seasonings evocative of Mediterranean cooking, including lemon, fresh herbs, pungent spices, fruity olive oil, and tangy yogurt.

Chinois Palais fabric, *in Blush Conch, fschumacher.com.* **Carving set,** *in White Lucite, shophorne.com.*

MIX + MATCH

The eight dishes here make it a breeze to put together a meal worthy of a **SPRING CELEBRATION,** whether **EASTER** lunch or dinner or a gathering in honor of the season's first warmer days. Choose a main course, a couple of sides, and a dessert. It's like a **MULTIPLE-CHOICE** test—but a lot more fun and with no wrong answers. All the recipes have harmonious flavors, textures, and colors, **SO ANY COMBINATION WORKS BEAUTIFULLY.** Expecting a big group? Go for "all of the above."

PHOTOGRAPHS BY **Christopher Testani**



Rolled Stuffed Salmon

These bundles of salmon are spiraled with sautéed Swiss chard and leeks for a dish that's both pretty and delicious. The individual portions are easy to assemble—and easy to serve at a buffet.

Hand-painted Chinese wallpaper panel *(SY-204), graciestudio.com.*

>> For recipes, see page 114. For more Easter menus, go to *marthastewart.com/easter-menu*.



Carrot-and-Lentil Salad

Ribbons of carrot wind through dressed black lentils in a dish that's colorful, light, and packed with protein. A generous sprinkling of parsley leaves and a vinaigrette with grated ginger give the salad freshness and zip. To make the ribbons, just use a vegetable peeler.

Feta-and-Dill-Stuffed Artichokes

A special-occasion dish, streamlined. You can trim and steam the artichokes in advance, then fill them just before baking. The five-ingredient stuffing includes bread, feta cheese, and dill, moistened with chicken broth and olive oil. Another drizzle of oil helps the dish brown in the oven.

2

Select Your Sides

Knowing how to combine flavors for an interesting menu can be tricky, but there's no guesswork here: These four dishes complement one another while highlighting some of the season's best produce. For a meal serving six people, two sides are plenty. For more variety, or if some of your guests are vegetarian, include another option or two.

Hand-painted wallpaper panel *(SY-200), graciestudio.com.*

Serve up seasonal dishes with the help of our food editors—watch the videos at *marthastewart.com/testkitchen.*



Asparagus and Fava Beans With Toasted Almonds

Two of spring's stars come together in this dish. Fava beans, with their buttery, nutty flavor, are a true delicacy. But prepping a whole bowl of them is admittedly a bit of work. (After you remove the beans from the pod, you blanch them and remove the tough skin from each bean.) This recipe makes a modest amount of favas go a long way, for maximum effect: sprinkled over blanched asparagus, topped with a lemony dressing, and finished with toasted almonds. The end result is one standout side.

Saffron-Rice and Potato Skillet Cake

Inspired by the Persian tahdig, which translates to "bottom of the pot," this skillet rice cake gets especially crisp as it cooks. A layer of potatoes goes into the pan first, then fragrant golden rice that's been simmered with saffron and studded with dried cherries is layered on top. Turn out the dish and slice it into wedges to serve.

Flora Collection round platter, *12", in Lemon Blossom, www.royalcopenhagen.us.*

3

Pick a Dessert

As it warms up outside, desserts with bright, sunny flavors like the ones in these two treats are especially appealing. So which to choose? With these two, it might come down to texture. The tart is a seductive study in contrasts, with an intense jammy filling over a sweet, crisp crust. The cake is moist, dense, and rich. It's also almost bracing in flavor. Lemon lovers won't be able to resist it.



Rhubarb-Strawberry Tart ➤
These two spring ingredients make a famous pair, with good reason: Sweet strawberries temper rhubarb's trademark tartness. The glistening, jewel-like filling in this rustic tart cooks down in the oven.

Chelsea Bird dessert plates, *mottahedeh.com.*



Triple-Citrus Bundt Cake

This spin on the familiar Bundt cake shines with lemon and orange. They flavor it in three ways (make that four, if you count the candied-zest garnish). There are segments in the batter, a syrup soaked into the baked cake, and, finally, a glaze. Fill the center with whipped cream and you'll get some with every slice.

Hand-painted Chinese scenic wallpaper panel *(SY-219), graciestudio.com.*

Created by Jennifer Aaronson, Sarah Carey, Tanya Graff, and Jaspal Riyait Text by Amy Conway



CLEAN YOUR MACHINES

With the push of a button, appliances and electronics help us get through our days a little more easily and efficiently. Yet somehow they rarely make it onto our homekeeping to-do list. Spring is the perfect time to give these indispensable devices some much-needed attention, in the form of a good, deep cleaning. What follows is the inside dirt on washing and maintaining the often-used, seldom-cleaned household machines in a few of your home's busiest spaces.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MATTHEW WILLIAMS

bright idea

TO CLEAN A VENT FILTER, REMOVE AND SOAK IT IN A MIX OF HOT WATER AND DISHWASHING LIQUID. LET THE FILTER DRY COMPLETELY BEFORE REINSTALLING.

Sources

Coffeemaker with hot-water system, *and* **Grind Central coffee grinder,** *cuisinart.com.*
Opposite: **Die-Cast 4-Slice Smart toaster,** *brevilleusa.com.*

did you know

FOR STREAK-FREE STAINLESS STEEL, WIPE IT WITH VINEGAR AND A SOFT CLOTH, ALWAYS WORKING IN THE DIRECTION OF THE GRAIN.

The Kitchen

If you're the type who consistently cleans up after each meal—dishes washed, counters wiped, stove top scrubbed—you're off to a great start. But the appliances that work hard for you every day need regular upkeep too. Clean them with the help of just a few natural products, all of which are likely already stocked in your cupboards or refrigerator.

Range Hood

The hood is on the receiving end of cooking-induced humidity—and, as a result, a lot of dust-trapping, grease-attracting residue. Once a week, wipe down the exterior with hot, soapy water using a soft cloth. If your fan is vented to the outside, check your owner's manual and remove and clean the filters accordingly (see tip, *opposite*); if not, you'll need to buy replacement filters.

Do use a plastic scrubbing brush to gently dislodge grease particles from filters that are especially dirty.

Don't put the filters in the dishwasher—even if they're labeled as dishwasher-safe: Cleaning them that way may discolor them.

editor's favorite

"I USE A TOOTHBRUSH TO DISLODGE STUCK-ON PIECES FROM THE TOASTER."
—Lorna Aragon, home editor



Toaster

Slices of toast pop out; crumbs stay in. Unplug the toaster and hold it over a trash can. Pull out the crumb tray and shake out the crumbs. If it's removable, wash it with soapy water; otherwise, wipe it with a damp cloth. If there's no tray, turn the toaster upside down and shake.

Do use vinegar and a soft cloth to shine the outside of a stainless steel toaster. If it's chrome, ball up some dampened aluminum foil and gently scrub away any rust spots.

Don't clean the toaster if it's warm. Wait for it to cool completely.



Microwave

Harness the power of steam to sanitize the interior of the machine. Heat 1 cup of water in a microwave-safe dish on high for 3 minutes, then leave the doors closed for 5 minutes more to let the steam soften any splatters. Finally, open the door and wipe everything clean with a sponge or soft cloth.

Do use lemon juice or vinegar to get rid of persistent odors. Simply mix ½ cup of lemon juice or distilled white vinegar into the water before you heat it.

Don't use harsh cleaners that may leave a strong scent, which can permeate food cooked inside.

Dishwasher

Take the racks out, and use a toothpick to clear any gunk from the holes in the spinning arms. Wash the grate where the water drains, as well as the removable filter (if there is one) with warm, soapy water. Wipe the rubber door seal with a damp cloth soaked in vinegar.

Do sprinkle 1 cup of baking soda on the bottom, then run the machine on a short hot-water cycle to battle stains and odors.

Don't use chlorine bleach to wipe out mildew if the machine has a stainless steel interior; bleach can corrode it.

TURN IT ON!

+ Blender
+ Coffeemaker
+ Coffee/spice grinder

There's rarely a self-cleaning feature on these small appliances, but degunking and deodorizing them is almost as simple. To get your blender sparkling, pour ½ cup of water and ⅓ cup of baking soda into the blender jar, cover it—and turn it on. Then wash the parts with warm, soapy water. Fill the carafe of a sluggish coffeemaker with equal parts water and white vinegar. Pour the liquid into the reservoir and—you guessed it—turn it on. After several cups, turn it off and let it sit for an hour. Then turn it back on to finish the cycle. (Follow with a few cycles of water, just to remove any traces of vinegar.) As for grinders, pulverize bread or uncooked rice in them to pick up coffee or spice residue.

Garbage Disposal

The best way to deodorize *and* scour your automatic disposal is to grind vinegar ice cubes in it.

Do throw in a halved lemon or orange and flip the switch for a fresh citrus scent.

Don't pour bleach or drain cleaners into the disposal. They can damage the blades and pipes.

Ice Maker

Turn off the ice maker, take the bin to the sink, melt the ice, and pour a solution of 2 tablespoons of baking soda for every quart of warm water into the bin. Wash and dry it thoroughly before replacing.

Do change your refrigerator's water filter if it's more than six months old.

Don't let ice sit in the bin for a long time, as it can pick up food odors. Empty and clean the bin once a month so the machine makes fresh cubes.



POWER TOOL

Vinegar

Look to your pantry for cleaning products. Vinegar is a great all-purpose cleaner; try it on stainless steel (see tip, *opposite*). It also cuts grease and deodorizes—naturally!

PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRYAN GARDNER (TOASTER, MICROWAVE); ILLUSTRATIONS BY TIM BOELAARS

The Home Office

To ensure that the computers and electronics in your study stay in tip-top shape, you'll need to commit to some dedicated hardware maintenance. Just be sure to clean all of the components—particularly any internal parts—with a gentle, cautious touch to avoid damaging anything. Never use harsh cleaning sprays or abrasive cleansers, and remember to unplug before you refresh.

bright idea

TO REMOVE STUBBORN STAINS BETWEEN KEYS, USE A COTTON SWAB THAT'S BEEN DIPPED IN ALCOHOL AND SQUEEZED SO IT'S JUST DAMP.

Keyboard

Your keyboard is a receptacle for all kinds of dirt and grime—even crumbs, if you eat at your desk. Spray compressed air in short bursts between the keys to dislodge particles. Then turn the keyboard over and gently shake out any remaining dirt. Finish by wiping the keys with a cloth dampened with a solution of a drop of mild dishwashing liquid and 1 quart of water.

Do buy an extension tube for your can of compressed air to really get between the keys.

Don't spray liquids—even water—directly onto the keyboard.



Monitor

Turn off the monitor before you begin; you can see smudges better against a black screen. Use a soft microfiber cloth to wipe dust off the screen, then dampen the cloth with a spray specifically designed for LCD and plasma monitors and wipe again to erase smudges and grime. Use a mixture of equal parts vinegar and water to de-smudge if you don't have the cleaning spray.

Do clean the screen only when it's cool, and only with light pressure. Heat can cause permanent streaks on the monitor when it's wiped.

Don't use alcohol- or ammonia-based products; they can damage monitors.

Computer Tower

A computer runs most efficiently when heat is allowed to escape; trapped dust impedes this. If you have a desktop that comes with a stand-alone tower, unplug it and consult the owner's manual about how to open its case to dust the interior. (If you keep your tower on the ground and have a pet, it may be especially clogged with dust and fur.) Use a microfiber cloth to wipe nonelectrical parts, such as the fan, and a can of compressed air to blow dust out of electrical parts, like the motherboard.

Do ground yourself by touching the case or wearing a static wrist guard. You don't want to inadvertently discharge static electricity and damage the electrical parts.

Don't use a vacuum cleaner to remove dust from electronics, as it can cause static electricity.

Printer

Moisten a soft cloth with water and wipe down the exterior of the machine, as well as the paper rollers. Use a moistened cotton swab for hard-to-reach areas. On laser printers, employ a dry swab to dust the corona wires, which are what make the paper attract toner. (Dirty wires can degrade the print quality.) Use compressed air to blow dust from the fan and vent. If the printer has a self-cleaning option, select it to clean the print head, which applies ink to the paper.

Do buy toner cleanup cloths (sold at office-supply stores) in case you get toner on your hands.

Don't clean the interior, aside from the cartridge.

DISINFECT THESE!

- Remote control
- Telephone
- Keyboard
- Mouse

Handheld gadgets and equipment get touched—a lot. So they may require a cleaning agent with a little more oomph than plain old water. To rid them of germs, simply dip a soft cloth into rubbing alcohol, squeeze the cloth so that it's damp but not dripping, and wipe down the gadget completely. Rubbing alcohol evaporates quickly, so you don't have to worry that the liquid will ruin the electrical parts. Or, even easier: Use a sanitizing wipe.



Electric Fan

A fan is a veritable dust magnet. Unplug it, remove the screens, and wash them in a tub or bucket of soapy water. Then wipe each blade with a soft cloth dampened with the soapy water.

Do refer to the owner's manual for dismantling procedures (every fan is different).

Don't reassemble until all the parts are completely dry.



POWER TOOL

Compressed Air

This office-supply-store staple removes dust from delicate or hard-to-reach areas. For the best results, angle the canister to blow the dust out of a device (not into it).

Cleaning duster, *by Insignia, $10, bestbuy.com.*

PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRYAN GARDNER (KEYBOARD, FAN); ILLUSTRATIONS BY TIM BOELAARS



Sources
Topanga chair, *serenaandlily.com.*
Saddle Ring Desk Collection magazine rack, *anthropologie.com.*
Opposite:
Turbo Silence table fan, *by Rowenta, macys.com.*

did you know

PAPER TOWELS ARE TOO ABRASIVE TO USE ON A MONITOR. ALWAYS CLEAN IT WITH A SOFT CLOTH, PREFERABLY MICROFIBER.

editor's favorite

"I USE A TOOTHPICK TO PICK OUT DIRT FROM REALLY TIGHT SPACES, LIKE THE HOLES IN A TELEPHONE'S RECEIVER."
—Amy Conway, editor at large



Sources
Ultra Large Capacity Steamwasher with Coldwash, *4.0 cu. ft. (similar to shown); and* **Ultra Large Capacity dryer with Sensor Dry,** *7.3 cu. ft. (similar to shown), lg.com.*
Effective Comfort iron, *by Rowenta, bed bathandbeyond.com.*

did you know

IF YOU USE HARD WATER IN YOUR IRON, YOU MAY NEED TO CLEAN IT MORE OFTEN.

bright idea

WIPE DOWN THE EXTERIORS OF THESE LAUNDRY APPLIANCES WITH A CLOTH DAMPENED WITH A DROP OF DISHWASHING LIQUID IN WATER. THEN RINSE WITH PLAIN WATER AND WIPE DRY.

The Laundry Room

Whether your washing machine, dryer, and vacuum are housed in a closet, a nook, or a dedicated laundry or utility room, chances are that spot isn't on your regular cleanup route. Unfortunately, such spaces can be among the dustiest and mustiest if not properly maintained. Keeping these appliances clean not only extends their lives, but in the case of the dryer, it can actually help reduce the risk of fire.

Washing Machine

Clean the rubber seal of the door with a soft cloth and a solution of 1 cup of chlorine bleach to 2 cups of warm water (be sure to wear protective gloves); pay extra attention to the lower portion of the seal, where water tends to pool. Then fill the bleach dispenser with bleach and run the washer, without laundry, through a hot-water cycle.

Do use vinegar instead of bleach for sanitizing, if you prefer a natural alternative (but never mix the two—the combo creates toxic fumes).

Don't close the door after each wash; keep it open to let the interior dry and to discourage mildew.

editor's favorite

"I LOVE MY DRYER VENT BRUSH. I USE IT TO CLEAN THE LINT TRAP AND TO GRAB DUST FROM UNDER THE UNIT."
—Kevin Sharkey, decorating director



Dryer

Take out the lint screen and remove the lint. Use a dryer vent brush (or the crevice tool of your vacuum cleaner) to pick up any residual lint and dust inside the trap.

Do schedule a yearly appointment with a professional duct-and-vent cleaner. Many HVAC specialists also offer this service.

Don't ignore signs of blockage in the ducts: Have them cleaned by a pro if your clothes take longer than normal to dry or come out hotter, if the exterior of the dryer gets very hot, if you smell burning, or if the room gets more humid than usual.



Vacuum

Not surprisingly, your vacuum gets dusty. Use a soft, damp cloth (dipped in soapy water) to wipe the exterior of the vacuum and all its attachments. If it has a bin, empty and rinse it with plain water only, then let it dry completely. Use a dry cloth or brush to clear lint buildup from interior parts; the inner workings should never get wet.

Do use scissors or a seam ripper (as shown, *above*) to cut and remove fibers, thread, and hair tangled and wound around the beater bar.

Don't let the bin or bag get more than three-quarters full. Check it regularly, and empty it as needed to maintain optimum suction.

Iron

It's common for mineral deposits to appear on the soleplate's steam vents. To remove them, fill the reservoir with water and switch on the steam-clean setting if there is one. Or place the iron flat on a metal cooling rack over a surface that won't be damaged by heat or water, turn the setting to steam and maximum heat, and let steam and water jet through the holes.

Do know your iron's water requirements. Some models recommend using distilled water, others tap water, and still others a mix of the two.

Don't use steel wool or other abrasive cleansers or tools, all of which can scratch the soleplate.

Dehumidifier

A dehumidifer can be handy in basement laundry rooms—as long as you give the machine a good scrubbing every season. Wash the water tank with soapy water. If there's a reusable filter, remove it and soak it in soapy water too. Unscrew the cover carefully (the machine can be difficult to put back together); clean the heating and cooling coils with a narrow soft brush, and wipe the fan blades with a damp cloth.

Do use a vacuum with a brush attachment to clean the air intake and exhaust grilles.

Don't place the unit too close to a wall, which can cause a blockage in the air intake and exhaust system.

REPLACE THESE!

- + Hoses
- + Lint screen
- + Motor belt
- + Filter

There are times when no amount of cleaning can resuscitate a machine. Luckily, often the only thing between you and a smooth operator is a replacement part. Your washing machine's hoses should be replaced every five years. Your dryer's lint screen should be swapped for a new one if damaged. If you notice you have to go over a spot with your vacuum several times, replace the motor belt. As for its filter, if it's made of paper and very dirty or torn, replace it. If it's a HEPA filter, follow the manufacturer's recommended replacement schedule.

Created by Lorna Aragon, Jenn McManus, and Fan Winston



POWER TOOL

Iron-Cleaner Kit

If your iron drags, the culprit may be a buildup of products like starch and fabric softeners on the soleplate. Put a dab of iron cleaner on an old towel and run the hot iron over it to remove any residue.

Stainless steel iron soleplate cleaning kit, *by Rowenta, $13, bedbathandbeyond.com.*

PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRYAN GARDNER (VENT BRUSH, VACUUM); ILLUSTRATIONS BY TIM BOELAARS



SEEDS of GLORY



POPPY-SEED TWISTS

Known in their native Denmark as frosnappere, these breakfast treats have inspired many a "Danish" in America. Sesame and poppy seeds (*fro* means "seed" in Danish) are bound together by an incomparably flaky, buttery dough.

INCORPORATE THESE TINY POWERHOUSES INTO BAKED GOODS AND REAP A BOUNTY OF FLAVOR, TEXTURE, AND RICHNESS.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JONATHAN LOVEKIN TEXT BY MICHELLE STACEY

>> For recipes, see page 116.

With all the recent buzz about the nutritional benefits of seeds, it can be easy to overlook what really makes them a staple of cuisines all over the world:

THEY WORK CULINARY MAGIC.

Replete with healthy fats, seeds add not only moisture and density but also a satisfying crunch and a distinctive flavor—further enhanced by toasting or grinding—to all kinds of dishes. In fact, these little superstars have been quietly sustaining people for thousands of years; think sesame tahini in the Middle East or a cumin-laced curry from India. But it is arguably in baked goods and sweets that seeds reach their greatest potential, imparting a nutty, fragrant essence to all manner of cookies, breads, and pastries.

The richness of seeds, bursting as they are with flavor and nutrition, is not surprising when you consider that each little capsule is essentially a plant's embryo, containing everything needed to begin life (given the right temperature and water). Their cultivation as a foodstuff spans history and the globe, from flaxseed fields in 3000 B.C. Babylon to pumpkin seeds in pre-Columbian America. East Indians not only ground fennel seeds for sauces and curries, but also chewed on them whole after meals to aid digestion (traditions that persist to this day). And evidence found in Swiss lake dwellings shows that caraway seeds were used there five thousand years ago. From Europe, caraway and other seeds, including poppy and fennel, were carried north, where they have long held the spotlight. Caraway is used to flavor aquavit, the Nordic spirit that takes its name from the Latin "water of life"; the ubiquitous knaeckbrod, or crispbread, boasts three or four different seeds; and poppy seeds—whole or ground into a paste—appear in both sweet and savory breads and pastries.

More recently, many of these little pods have been hailed as superfoods, packed with vitamins, minerals, fiber, antioxidants, and beneficial fatty acids. They're easy to use, whether raw, roasted, or baked into a dish, but their oil content makes them especially perishable. Buy yours at a grocer where turnover is high, and store them in resealable bags in the freezer to keep them from going rancid. Then get creative—fold them into a batter, sprinkle them on a homemade yeast roll or pastry, or toast them as a topping or snack—to enjoy them in all their splendor.

A GLOSSARY OF SEEDS

Increase your kernel knowledge with this guide to the top seeds.

ANISE
The distinctive licorice flavor of this seed is used in sweets and liqueurs worldwide—including Italian anisette cookies and spirits like Greek ouzo and Middle Eastern arak. It is often confused with the similar-tasting fennel, but anise seeds are smaller, and their flavor is more concentrated and floral.

BLACK AND WHITE SESAME
The mildly sweet sesame was one of the first oilseed crops to be domesticated. Now it can be found in almost every cuisine, from Japanese to Middle Eastern to Indian. The difference between the two varieties is largely aesthetic, as they taste quite similar.

BROWN AND GOLDEN FLAX
This suddenly ubiquitous seed achieved superfood status when studies showed it may protect against many illnesses, including cancer and heart disease. Flaxseeds' health benefits are more easily absorbed when they are consumed ground rather than whole.

CARAWAY
The fragrant caraway seed is a prominent player in eastern European and Scandinavian cuisine, showing up not only in baked goods but in stews, sauerkraut, and pickles. Now many American chefs are expanding caraway's role beyond rye and pumpernickel by adding it to meat or vegetable dishes.

CUMIN
Cumin, which adds an earthy flavor and medium spiciness to Indian, Middle Eastern, and South American cuisines, is often used in its ground form. (For the freshest flavor, toast and grind your own seeds.) In traditional medicine, cumin has long been used as a digestive aid.

FENNEL
A common ingredient in Chinese five-spice powder, Italian sausage, and many Indian curries, fennel has long been revered for its aromatic pungency and its digestive benefits. Puritans called it the "meeting seed" because, according to some historians, it was thought to fend off hunger during long sermons.

HEMP
Seeds from the hemp plant—the stalks of which were long harvested for nonfood uses like clothing and rope—are newly celebrated for their high levels of essential fatty acids, protein, and antioxidants. It is part of the cannabis family—but not to be confused with what is cultivated as marijuana.

NIGELLA
Tiny, stark-black nigella seeds, which have a nutty, peppery flavor, are often used in Indian spice mixes and as a topping for breads such as naan.

POPPY
Once considered a natural sleep aid (perhaps not surprising, since the poppy plant also yields opium), the dusky seeds are common toppings for breads and bagels. When ground, they gain flavor and intensity, providing a rich base for the sweet paste that is a popular filling in eastern European baked goods such as strudel and hamantaschen.

PUMPKIN
In culinary terminology, these are often called pepitas, their Spanish name, especially when they have been hulled to reveal the green interiors. These protein- and antioxidant-rich seeds make a great snack when roasted and salted but also work well in breads, trail mixes, and salads.

SUNFLOWER
Often consumed on its own as a snack, the dehulled sunflower "seed" is more accurately called the kernel or heart. Nutlike and substantial, it is also a popular source of cooking oil and sunflower butter, an allergen-free alternative to peanut butter.


BLACK AND WHITE SESAME
FENNEL
CUMIN
HEMP
SUNFLOWER
POPPY
ANISE
NIGELLA
CARAWAY
BROWN AND GOLDEN FLAX
PUMPKIN



MIXED-SEED CLUSTERS

Why reach for a packaged energy bar when you can easily bake a batch of protein-packed snack mix? A combination of honey, olive oil, and egg whites binds a variety of seeds—anise, sesame, pumpkin, and flax—to oats and pistachios. The clusters are just right for eating out of hand or as a topping for ice cream or yogurt.

SEEDED
SAVORY
QUICK
BREAD



● This robust loaf—chockablock with caraway, flax, sunflower, and black sesame seeds—comes together in a snap, no yeast or rising required. Spread it with butter and jam for a simple and delicious breakfast, snack on it toasted and topped with ricotta, or layer on a thin piece of hard cheese and avocado slices for an open-faced sandwich.

The traditional version of this classic, which hails from Australia, incorporates crushed sweet crackers into the meringue cake for texture. Here, seeds—including ground toasted sunflower, pumpkin, and sesame—contribute a subtly nutty essence and crunch to both the cake (which is spread with cherry preserves) and the whipped cream on top.

SEEDED SARATOGA TORTE



SEEDED GRAHAM BISCOTTI



Graham flour, a double hit of vanilla (from both seeds and extract), and hemp and aromatic fennel seeds flavor a batch of almond-studded cookies, which are also coated in sesame seeds. Try them with an afternoon espresso.

Created by Jennifer Aaronson, Ayesha Patel, and Jennifer Wagner

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HOW-TO HANDBOOK

Learn, Make, Connect



Look for specialty eggs at farm stands, or order them (glazed or unglazed) from our Martha Stewart American Made vendor Naked Eggs, at *ebay.com/american-made/naked-eggs*.

ASK MARTHA

HOW DO I GET A SHINY FINISH ON DYED EASTER EGGS?

—Ashley Barnas, Newark, Del.

First, blow out the eggs. Then make a pinboard for drying them: Stick flathead pins into foam board, forming a grid of pins that you can rest the eggs on. Dye the eggs as desired and let them dry on the pinboard, then spray them with an enamel finish (such as Martha Stewart Crafts sprayable gloss enamel; $7, *michaels.com*) in a well-ventilated area. Let them dry on the pinboard for 10 minutes, then repeat spraying. You can try this process on a variety of eggs, as we did here. The eggs' natural patterns and hues produce different effects when they're dyed—plus, the range of sizes will add interest to your holiday display. Look for a range of colors and sizes at local farm stands and specialty-food stores.

PHOTOGRAPH BY BRYAN GARDNER

marthastewart.com/egg-dyeing-101
Blow out eggs, make a pinboard, and more.

Q: There are so many varieties of rice available. How are they different from one another, and how do I choose which to buy? —Jimmy Kirch, Englewood, Colo.



Tip: Cook rice in a medium-size pot (to ensure the water covers the rice) with a thick bottom (this helps prevent scorching).

A: The nuances in flavor between these whole-grain varieties can add dimension to your dishes. Here's when to use which rice and why.

WHITE
Mild-tasting white rice is the most common variety; it's great as a supporting player when you want other flavors to shine. It pairs well with most dishes.

ARBORIO
This short, wide-grain rice, best known in risotto, has a high starch content. As it cooks, the starch is released and lends a creaminess to the dish.

JASMINE
An aromatic long-grain rice with a sweet flavor, jasmine rice is similar to basmati and commonly served in Thai cuisine. It is very light and fluffy, almost dry, when cooked.

BROWN
Brown rice features a nutty flavor and chewy texture. It takes longer to cook than many types, and its outer layer, or bran, keeps it from absorbing sauce the way white rice can. Use it in pilafs, rice cakes, and stir-fries.

SUSHI
Sushi rice (also known as glutenous or pearl rice) is starchy and sticky. It's used in sushi (naturally) and some Japanese desserts.

BLACK
Sometimes called purple or forbidden rice, black rice cooks much like brown rice, and its antioxidant levels are on par with those of blueberries. Try this sweet and nutty type in Asian dishes and stir-fries.

BASMATI
This Indian long-grain rice is delicious on its own or with curries and other spicy dishes. When cooked properly, it should be very light.

Q: What is the secret to foolproof scrambled eggs?

—Doug Watson, Covington, Ky.

A: Thomas Joseph of the Kitchen Conundrums video series takes us through his recommended steps for the most delicious scrambled eggs.



1

Whisk together 3 eggs until whites and yolks are no longer separated; season with salt and pepper. Melt 1 tablespoon butter in an 8-inch nonstick skillet over low, then add eggs.



2

Pull eggs to center of pan with a heatproof spatula. Allow liquid part to fill to edges. (Don't overstir, as this will create tiny curds.)



3

Remove eggs before they're cooked through (they should look set but still slightly wet); they will continue to cook and firm up a bit after they're plated.

marthastewart.com/kitchenconundrums
Watch Thomas Joseph solve common cooking problems.

PHOTOGRAPH BY BRYAN GARDNER; ILLUSTRATIONS BY BROWN BIRD DESIGN (EGGS), LAUREN TAMAKI (COMPOST)

Q: I want to start composting. What are some things I can (and cannot) compost?

—Zach Stone, Arlington, Va.

A: Composting helps decrease the amount of trash in landfills and can provide an organic fertilizer for your garden. The essentials of composting are green and brown materials and water. Carbon-providing brown materials include dead leaves, branches, and twigs. Green ones, which supply nitrogen, include grass clippings, vegetable waste, fruit scraps, and coffee grounds. Water provides moisture to assist in breakdown. Here are a few dos and don'ts that might surprise you; for more, go to *marthastewart.com/composting*.



Cut natural-fiber clothing (including wool and silk) into pieces, then compost them. Add wine corks, excluding plastic ones, to the pile. Tea bags can be added, but make sure to remove any staples.



Cooking oil and butter and fish bones can create odor problems, which attract pests. Black-walnut-tree leaves and twigs release a toxic chemical called juglone that will compromise a compost pile.

Q: My pet sheds everywhere. How can I remove the hair effectively?

—Haley Sullivan, Chelmsford, Mass.

A: Regular grooming will help cut down on your pet's shedding but won't completely stop the fur from flying. To pick up dog or cat hair, choose the method that's best suited to the surface you want to clean. An electrostatic mop will trap hair on wooden and other hard floors better than a vacuum, which can blow hair around. For clothing and fabrics, use a tape roller, lint brush, or dry sponge (sold at pet-supply stores). On upholstery, use a hand vacuum with a motorized beater-bar attachment.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU! Send your questions to Ask Martha, c/o Letters Department, *Martha Stewart Living*, 601 West 26th Street, New York, NY 10001, or to *ask martha@marthastewart.com*. Please include your full name, address, and daytime phone number. To reach Ask Martha at SiriusXM Stars, channel 109, call 866-675-6675 or e-mail *radio@marthastewart.com*. Letters and messages become the property of Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia Inc. and may be published, broadcast, edited, or otherwise used in any of its media. By submitting your questions to Ask Martha, you are agreeing to let us use your name and hometown in connection with our publication of your questions.





PEARLY WISDOM

What takes just five minutes a day and could dramatically affect your long-term health? Hint: It doesn't involve exercise, vitamins, or any of the latest wellness fads. Stumped? Read on for the answer!

ILLUSTRATION BY BEN WISEMAN

WE HEAD TO THE GYM and the yoga studio, eat our fruits and veggies, even embark on monthlong cleanses—all in an effort to stay healthy. But one of the best things for our well-being takes just minutes a day: properly caring for our teeth.

"The mouth is a window to the rest of the body," says New York City dentist Gregg Lituchy. Over the past decade, medical professionals have discovered that good oral hygiene doesn't just keep your whites pearly. There's growing research showing possible links between chronic inflammation of the gums—known as periodontal disease—and heart disease, diabetes, and possibly even Alzheimer's disease.

And yet a lot of us are still cutting our sink time short: A 2012 study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that 47.2 percent of adults over 30 in the United States have gum disease. "A lot of people just brush until their mouth is minty and only floss the day before their dentist appointment," says Jonathan Levine, a New York City–based dentist and oral-health expert. But even though the drugstore's dental aisle teems with new products (and big promises), you don't actually need many bells and whistles to keep your mouth healthy.

Reboot Your Routine

While many of us dutifully brush our teeth, we tend to think of flossing as extra credit. It's hard to justify skipping it, though, when you consider all the bacteria hiding in your gums. If neglected, these germs can turn into tartar, inflame the gums, and travel through the bloodstream to other parts of the body, leading to more serious health issues. And the risk of gum disease increases with age. "Brushing only gets you so far—for adults, flossing is actually more important from a medical standpoint," says Levine.

And it's not enough to merely pop the floss in and out: "The goal is not just to get floss between teeth but to remove the plaque below the gumline," says holistic dentist Marvin Pantangco, based in Encinitas, California. To do that, wrap the floss around each tooth just below the gumline in a C shape, and move it back and forth in a shoe-shining motion. If manipulating regular floss is a struggle, try a plastic flossing tool or an irrigator, like the Waterpik. "I'm in favor of all of the tools out there—whatever makes it easier to make flossing a habit," says Levine.

In terms of brushing, dentists stand by the two-minute rule. »

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IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

You must not take Otezla® (apremilast) if you are allergic to apremilast or to any of the ingredients in Otezla.

Otezla is associated with an increase in adverse reactions of depression. In clinical studies, some patients reported depression and suicidal behavior while taking Otezla. Some patients stopped taking Otezla due to depression. Before starting Otezla, tell your doctor if you have had feelings of depression, suicidal thoughts, or suicidal behavior. Be sure to tell your doctor if any of these symptoms or other mood changes develop or worsen during treatment with Otezla.

Some patients taking Otezla lost body weight. Your doctor should monitor your weight regularly. If unexplained or significant weight loss occurs, your doctor will decide if you should continue taking Otezla.

Some medicines may make Otezla less effective, and should not be taken with Otezla. Tell your doctor about all the medicines you take, including prescription and nonprescription medicines.

Side effects of Otezla were diarrhea, nausea, upper respiratory tract infection, tension headache, and headache.

These are not all the possible side effects with Otezla. Ask your doctor about other potential side effects. Tell your doctor about any side effect that bothers you or does not go away.

Tell your doctor if you are pregnant, planning to become pregnant or planning to breastfeed. Otezla has not been studied in pregnant women or in women who are breastfeeding.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch, or call 1-800-332-1088.

Please see Brief Summary of Prescribing Information on the following page.



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Rx Only

Brief Summary of Information About OTEZLA® (oh-TEZ-lah) (apremilast) Tablets

This information does not take the place of talking to your doctor about your medical condition or treatment. If you have any questions about OTEZLA® (apremilast), ask your doctor. Only your doctor can determine if OTEZLA is right for you.

What is the most important information I should know about OTEZLA?
OTEZLA may cause serious side effects:

Depression was reported by some patients taking OTEZLA. Before taking OTEZLA, tell your doctor if you have had feelings of depression, suicidal thoughts, or suicidal behavior. You, your caregivers, and family members should be alert for the development or worsening of depression, suicidal thoughts, or other mood changes. If such changes occur, contact your doctor. Your doctor will determine whether you should continue taking OTEZLA.

Weight loss occurred in some patients taking OTEZLA. Your doctor should monitor your weight regularly. If unexplained or significant weight loss occurs, your doctor will consider whether you should continue taking OTEZLA.

Some medicines should not be taken with OTEZLA as they may make OTEZLA less effective. Tell your doctor about all the medications you take, including prescription and nonprescription medications.

What is OTEZLA?
OTEZLA is a prescription medicine used for the treatment of patients with moderate to severe plaque psoriasis for whom phototherapy or systemic therapy is appropriate.

It is not known if OTEZLA is safe and effective in children less than 18 years of age.

Who should not take OTEZLA?
You must not take OTEZLA if you are allergic to apremilast or to any of the ingredients in OTEZLA.

What should I tell my doctor before taking OTEZLA?
Tell your doctor if you:
- have had feelings of depression, suicidal thoughts, or suicidal behavior
- have any kidney problems
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if OTEZLA can harm your unborn baby.
- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. It is not known if OTEZLA passes into your breast milk.

What are the side effects of OTEZLA?
- OTEZLA may cause serious side effects. See "**What is the most important information I should know about OTEZLA?**"
- **Common side effects** of OTEZLA are:
 - diarrhea
 - nausea
 - upper respiratory tract infection
 - tension headache
 - headache

These are not all the possible side effects with OTEZLA. Tell your doctor about any side effect that bothers you or does not go away.

General Information about OTEZLA

Medicines are sometimes prescribed for purposes other than those listed in their package inserts. This is a Brief Summary of important information about OTEZLA. Ask your doctor or pharmacist for more complete product information, or visit otezla.com, or call 1-844-4OTEZLA (1-844-468-3952).

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PARTNERS' PICKS

The April issue means that spring is arriving at last. Our latest partners' picks are just the things to welcome it, with hints of Easter and flowers and the promise of outdoor dining weather!

1. Milk Glass Cake Stand and Dome by Martha Stewart Collection™, available exclusively at Macy's, $79, macys.com/martha. ***2. Learn with Martha: Hand-Lettering Kit*** by Martha Stewart Crafts®, available exclusively at Michaels, $19.99, michaels.com. ***3. Whim™ Collection*** by Martha Stewart Collection™, available exclusively at Macy's; 5pc bedding sets $140 – $200, sheet sets and quilts from $50, macys.com/martha. ***4. Oleander 7pc Dining Set*** by Martha Stewart Living™, available exclusively at Home Decorators Collection; all-weather wicker in honey with blue and white stripes, $1799, homedecorators.com.

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COURTESY OF THE MANUFACTURERS AND BRYAN GARDNER

There's less consensus about whether electric toothbrushes are inherently more effective than regular toothbrushes, or simply encourage better habits because they frequently have built-in timing devices. Many dentists say you can get the same results if you practice good technique with a manual toothbrush, as long as you resist the urge to scrub. "The biggest mistake people make is to brush too vigorously, which scrapes away the enamel," says Levine. Opt for a soft-bristled brush, and "hold it like a paintbrush, not a baseball bat."

As for toothpastes, look for brands that don't contain sodium lauryl sulfate (a foaming agent that causes allergic reactions in many people); artificial sweeteners like saccharine and aspartame; or triclosan, a detergent that kills bacteria but is considered overly aggressive by some dentists. Fluoride, too, has become a controversial ingredient in recent years. Most traditional dentists say it's the best weapon against cavities, but some experts believe there's a link between fluoridation (largely in drinking water) and neurological and reproductive issues. Talk to your dentist to help determine whether you want a fluoridated toothpaste or not. If you prefer to go the all-natural route, brush regularly or a few times a week with a mix of baking soda and hydrogen peroxide, which "forces high-oxygen material, which bacteria hate, under areas where they hide," says Pantangco.

Beyond the Basics

While most people are fine brushing twice a day and flossing once daily, many dentists encourage the use of other tools, like nonalcoholic mouthwashes and tongue rakes, for patients fighting stubborn bad breath. Available at health-food stores and most drugstores, the rakes help remove bacteria hiding out in the fissures of the tongue.

And if you have flossed, brushed, raked, gargled, and kept your biannual dentist appointments yet still have bad breath or inflamed gums, your diet may be the reason. Sugary, acidic, tooth-eroding soda gets all the attention, but other culprits may surprise you—including dried fruit, because it's both sugary and sticks to the teeth; and alcohol, which dries out the mouth, encouraging bacterial growth. (You don't have to cut these out of your diet, but brush soon after consuming them, says Lituchy, who admits to a weakness for Sour Patch candy.) Bacteria also thrive in an acidic environment, which is created by a diet low in fruit and vegetables and high in carbohydrates and protein. Score another point for leafy greens: "What's good for the body," says Levine, "is usually good for the mouth, too." —*Miranda Crowell*

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SNIFF AND SCRATCH

Allergies don't afflict only people. If your pet seems to have an itch that just won't stop, it could well be reacting to a trigger in the air (springtime blooms!) or in its food. Here are some ways to spot—and soothe—the symptoms.

ILLUSTRATION BY MARQUITOS FARINA



THINK "PET ALLERGIES" and you no doubt picture a person who starts sneezing at the mere sight of a cat. But cats and dogs can suffer from allergies, too, including seasonal varieties. Skin allergies were the number-one reason dogs were taken to the vet in the U.S. in 2013, and also ranked among the top 10 ailments for cats the same year, according to Veterinary Pet Insurance (VPI).

Allergies in pets and humans are triggered by many of the same things (pollen, dust, mold spores, and certain foods, to name a few) and can be inborn or develop later in life. The way they differ is in their symptoms, says Ashley Gallagher, a staff veterinarian at Friendship Hospital for Animals, in Washington, D.C. Rather than sneezing or watery eyes, most pet allergies cause persistent scratching, which can make them hard to diagnose and treat, says Jeff Werber, a veterinarian in Los Angeles. You need to be a bit of a pet detective to ease your furry friend's suffering.

Know the Symptoms

In cats, all allergies generally look the same: scratching leads to scabs and sores, a condition called miliary dermatitis. Dogs send out a few more specific signs. Itchiness on the rump suggests a flea allergy, and on the inside of the belly and thighs implicates pollen; face rubbing and foot chewing may signal a food allergy. If the symptoms occur year-round, your dog is most likely reacting to something in the home or its food, while irritation in spring or fall could point to seasonal allergies. Many pets experience only mild forms, but if yours scratches enough to cause sore spots or hair loss, it's time to see the vet.

Provide Relief

Depending on the results of allergy tests, blood work, and other screenings, your vet may suggest medications such as immunosuppressants. A new drug called Apoquel may also help break the itch cycle in dogs. You can take steps at home to alleviate symptoms, even without knowing the cause. Reduce exposure to common allergens such as dust and fleas by frequently combing and bathing your pet (which helps wash away pollen), regularly vacuuming and cleaning its bedding, and using air purifiers. If you suspect a seasonal allergy, consider preventing the symptoms altogether by giving your pet antihistamines a few weeks before the bloom. You can also try eliminating foods one at a time—common culprits include beef, chicken, lamb, dairy, and wheat. "It can be frustrating to treat allergies in pets," says Gallagher. "But if you stick with it, you can manage and control the itch." —*Karen Asp*

Holistic Help

If you're concerned about dosing your pet with various meds, consider taking a holistic approach to treatment. Rather than seeing allergies as the result of an external trigger that must be controlled, holistic vets consider them a dysfunction of the immune system and start treatment by looking for a root cause.

There are three potential culprits, says Marcie Fallek, a holistic veterinarian who practices in New York City and Fairfield, Connecticut: overvaccination, emotional stress, and an inadequate or imbalanced diet. "We work to cure, not just manage, the allergy," she says.

Once a cause is identified, holistic vets advise non-medicinal treatments to get the immune system back on track. These can include holistic treatments such as herbs, acupuncture, and nutritional supplements.

The one caveat? "Holistic therapies don't necessarily work quickly or instantly," says Fallek. "But in most cases you will find a permanent cure, with patience."

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Mix + Match

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SALT-CRUSTED LEG OF LAMB

Active Time: **30 min.**
Total Time: **2 hr. 45 min.**
Serves: **8**

- **¼ cup fennel seeds**
- **Peel of 6 lemons, chopped, plus lemon wedges for serving**
- **½ cup fresh rosemary leaves**
- **2 tablespoons whole black peppercorns, crushed**
- **10 fresh bay leaves, torn**
- **½ cup extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for lamb**
- **1 bone-in leg of lamb (11 pounds), trimmed and frenched**
- **2 boxes (3 pounds each) coarse salt**
- **11 large egg whites**

1. Finely chop fennel seeds, lemon peel, rosemary, peppercorns, and bay leaves in a food processor. Transfer ¾ cup of mixture to a bowl; stir in oil.

2. Heat broiler with rack in middle of oven. Place lamb on a rimmed baking sheet; rub with oil. Broil until browned, flipping once, about 10 minutes. Transfer to a wire rack set on another baking sheet; let cool. Reduce oven to 350°.

3. Combine remaining herb mixture with salt in a large bowl. Stir in egg whites and 1 cup water. Rub herb oil over lamb. Mound 3 cups of salt mixture in middle of a roasting pan. Place lamb on top. Pack remaining salt on lamb to cover as best as possible. Bake until a thermometer inserted in thickest part (without touching bone) registers 145°, about 90 minutes. Remove salt crust, brushing off bits. Let lamb stand 30 minutes; carve and serve, with lemon wedges.

ROLLED STUFFED SALMON

Active Time: **50 min.**
Total Time: **1 hr. 20 min.**
Serves: **6**

- **3 tablespoons unsalted butter**
- **2 large leeks, white and pale-green parts only, chopped and washed well (3¼ cups)**
- **1 bunch Swiss chard, tough stems trimmed, leaves chopped (6 cups)**
- **Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper**
- **½ cup plain Greek yogurt**
- **2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice**
- **1 tablespoon whole-grain mustard**
- **1 tablespoon Dijon mustard**
- **2 teaspoons minced garlic**
- **2 teaspoons low-sodium soy sauce**
- **2¼ pounds salmon fillet, preferably wild, skin removed**
- **¼ cup packed dill sprigs, plus 6 more sprigs for tops**
- **Extra-virgin olive oil**

1. Preheat oven to 450°. Melt butter in a large skillet over high. Add leeks; cook, stirring, until just golden, about 4 minutes. Add chard; season with salt and pepper. Cook, tossing, until wilted, about 3 minutes. Let cool.

2. In a small bowl, whisk together yogurt, lemon juice, mustards, garlic, and soy sauce.

3. Butterfly salmon by cutting horizontally through middle along one long side, leaving other side intact. Open flat, like a book. Flip salmon, skinned-side up; season with salt and pepper. Spread top with ¼ cup yogurt mixture. Top with dill sprigs, then chard mixture.

4. With a long side facing you, roll up salmon into a tight log. Secure with 6 pieces of kitchen twine, starting about 1¼ inches from end and spacing evenly. Cut salmon into 6 equal pieces, slicing between twine. Tuck a dill sprig under twine on each roll.

5. Place rolls in a baking dish and drizzle with oil, rubbing to coat. Season with salt and pepper. Roast until salmon is opaque on outside but still pink inside, about 15 minutes. Serve, with remaining yogurt mixture alongside.

CARROT-AND-LENTIL SALAD

Active Time: **20 min.**
Total Time: **55 min.**
Serves: **8**

- **1 cup black or Le Puy lentils, picked over and rinsed**
- **½ yellow onion**
- **2 cloves garlic**
- **2 teaspoons grated peeled fresh ginger (from a ¾-inch piece)**
- **1 teaspoon Dijon mustard**
- **3 tablespoons white-wine vinegar**
- **Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper**
- **½ cup extra-virgin olive oil**
- **4 carrots, peeled and shaved into thin strips with a peeler**
- **1 cup packed fresh flat-leaf parsley leaves**

1. Bring lentils, onion, garlic, and 4 cups water to a boil in a saucepan. Reduce heat; simmer until tender, about 20 minutes.

2. Meanwhile, whisk together ginger, mustard, and vinegar in a small bowl. Season with salt and pepper. Gradually whisk in oil. Toss together carrots, parsley, and half of dressing in a bowl. Season with salt and pepper.

3. Drain lentils; discard onion and garlic. Toss lentils with remaining dressing in another bowl. Transfer to a platter, top with carrot mixture, and serve.

FETA-AND-DILL-STUFFED ARTICHOKES

Active Time: **25 min.**
Total Time: **2 hr.**
Makes: **12 halves**

- **12 ounces rustic bread (¾ loaf)**
- **6 artichokes (8 ounces each), bottoms and leaf tips trimmed**
- **2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for drizzling and baking dish**

- **3 ounces feta cheese, crumbled**
- **3 tablespoons chopped fresh dill leaves, plus sprigs for serving**
- **1 cup low-sodium chicken broth**
- **Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper**

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Remove crust from bread and tear into ½-inch pieces (you should have 4 cups). Spread in a single layer on a rimmed baking sheet; dry in oven, 10 to 15 minutes. Let cool.

2. Stand artichokes in a saucepan just large enough to hold them. Add water until ¾ inch up sides of pan; bring to a boil. Reduce to a simmer, cover, and steam until artichokes are tender, 30 to 35 minutes. (Add more water as needed.) Transfer to a plate; let cool, then slice in half lengthwise. Scoop out fuzzy chokes with a spoon; discard.

3. Preheat oven to 375°. In a bowl, combine bread, oil, cheese, dill, and broth. Season mixture and insides of artichokes with salt and pepper. Divide stuffing among artichokes, mounding tops; drizzle with oil. Place in an oiled baking dish; bake until heated through and tops are golden brown, about 25 minutes. Drizzle with more oil, top with dill sprigs, and serve.

ASPARAGUS AND FAVA BEANS WITH TOASTED ALMONDS

Active Time: **35 min.**
Total Time: **40 min.**
Serves: **8**

- **1½ pounds fresh fava beans, shelled**
- **Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper**
- **1 pound asparagus, tough ends removed**
- **3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, plus more if needed**
- **2 cloves garlic, minced**
- **Juice and zest (removed in long strips) of 1 lemon**
- **½ cup raw almonds, toasted and chopped**

1. Blanch fava beans in a pot of salted boiling water just until tender, about 1 minute. Transfer to an ice-water bath. Blanch asparagus in pot until just tender, 2 to 3 minutes; transfer to ice-water bath. Drain vegetables. Remove outer skin from fava beans (you should have 1 cup). Pat asparagus dry.

2. Heat a large skillet over medium-high. Swirl in oil, then add garlic and fava beans and season with salt. Cook, stirring frequently, until garlic is softened, 2 minutes. Remove from heat. Transfer beans to a plate with a slotted spoon. Let skillet cool slightly, then whisk lemon juice into oil in skillet; season with salt and pepper. (Add more oil if dressing is too tart.) Add asparagus; toss to coat with dressing.

3. Combine almonds and lemon zest in a small bowl. Transfer asparagus to a platter, top with fava beans, and drizzle remaining dressing in skillet over top. Sprinkle with almond-zest mixture and serve.

SAFFRON-RICE AND POTATO SKILLET CAKE

Active Time: **20 min.**
Total Time: **1 hr. 15 min.**
Serves: **8**

- **2 cups basmati or jasmine rice, rinsed**
- **Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper**
- **Large pinch saffron**
- **1 large egg white**
- **¼ cup dried cherries, chopped**
- **¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil**
- **1 large russet potato, peeled and thinly sliced**

1. Combine rice and 2 teaspoons salt in a medium saucepan. Stir saffron into 2 cups water, then stir into rice. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer, uncovered, until rice has absorbed all water, stirring occasionally, about 8 minutes (rice will not be completely cooked). Let cool completely. Stir in egg white, then cherries.

2. Heat a 10-inch cast-iron skillet over medium. Swirl in oil, then arrange potato slices, overlapping slightly, in a circular pattern to cover bottom. Season with salt and pepper. Cook 15 minutes; remove from heat.

3. Top potatoes with rice mixture, pressing down in an even layer. Make several holes in rice mixture (to allow steam to escape). Wrap a kitchen towel around lid, cover skillet, and cook over low heat until rice is tender, about 20 minutes. Run a knife around edge of cake to loosen, then invert onto a platter, cut into wedges, and serve.

RHUBARB-STRAWBERRY TART

Active Time: **35 min.**
Total Time: **3 hr. 15 min.**
Serves: **8**

CRUST

- **1 large egg yolk**
- **2 to 4 tablespoons ice water**
- **1¼ cups all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting**
- **2 tablespoons sugar**
- **1 teaspoon coarse salt**
- **1 stick cold unsalted butter, cut into pieces**
- **Vegetable-oil cooking spray**

FILLING

- **12 ounces rhubarb, cut on the diagonal into 1-inch pieces (3 cups)**
- **8 ounces strawberries, hulled and cut into ½-inch pieces (1¼ cups)**
- **¾ cup sugar**
- **1 tablespoon plus 2 teaspoons cornstarch**
- **¾ teaspoon coarse salt**
- **1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice**

1. Crust: Lightly beat yolk and 2 tablespoons ice water in a small bowl until combined.

2. Pulse flour, sugar, and salt in a food processor to combine. Add butter and process until mixture resembles coarse meal, about 15 seconds. With machine running, add yolk mixture in a slow, steady stream. Pulse until mixture holds together; if dough is still too dry, add additional ice water, 1 tablespoon at a time. Shape dough into a disk and wrap in plastic. Refrigerate until firm, at least 30 minutes and up to overnight.

3. Preheat oven to 375° with racks in middle and bottom. Coat bottom and sides of a 9-inch springform pan with cooking spray. Let dough stand until pliable. On a lightly floured surface, roll out dough slightly thicker than ⅛ inch. Cut out an 11-inch round. Fit into bottom and up sides of prepared pan. Freeze 15 minutes.

4. Filling: Stir together rhubarb, strawberries, sugar, cornstarch, salt, and lemon juice in a large bowl. Pour into tart shell. Bake, with a foil-lined rimmed baking sheet on bottom rack to catch juices, until bubbling in center, about 1 hour, 15 minutes. (If browning too quickly, tent with foil during last 15 minutes.) Remove from oven. Release sides of pan immediately. Let tart cool on pan base on a wire rack before cutting into wedges and serving warm or room temperature.

TRIPLE-CITRUS BUNDT CAKE

Active Time: **45 min.**
Total Time: **6 hr.**
Serves: **10 to 12**

CAKE

- **Vegetable-oil cooking spray**
- **2¾ cups all-purpose flour, plus more for pan**
- **2 lemons**
- **1 large or 2 small oranges**
- **1½ cups superfine sugar**
- **2 teaspoons baking powder**
- **1¾ teaspoons coarse salt**
- **¾ cup crème fraîche**
- **6 large eggs, room temperature**
- **1½ sticks unsalted butter, melted**

SYRUP

- **⅓ cup fresh lemon juice (from 1 to 2 lemons)**

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- **3 tablespoons fresh orange juice**
- **½ cup superfine sugar**

GLAZE

- **1 cup sifted confectioners' sugar**
- **2 to 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice**

SERVING

- **Lightly sweetened whipped cream**
- **Candied lemon zest (optional; for recipe, go to *marthastewart.com/candied-lemon-zest*)**

1. Cake: Preheat oven to 350°. Coat a 10-cup Bundt pan (or kugelhopf mold) with cooking spray; dust with flour, tapping out excess. Finely grate 2 teaspoons lemon zest and ½ teaspoon orange zest.

2. With a sharp knife, remove peel and bitter white pith from all citrus. Holding a lemon over a bowl, cut between membranes to release segments into bowl. Squeeze juice from membranes into another bowl. Repeat with remaining lemon and orange(s), combining segments in one bowl and juices in other. Cut segments into ¼-inch pieces. (You will need 3 tablespoons juice and ¾ cup segments.)

3. Sift together flour, superfine sugar, baking powder, and salt into a bowl. Add crème fraîche; beat on medium speed until combined. Add eggs, one at a time, beating to combine after each. Beat in butter, citrus juices, and zests. Add citrus segments and beat just to combine. Transfer batter to prepared pan. Bake, rotating pan once, until a tester inserted in middle comes out clean, about 48 minutes.

4. Syrup: Bring citrus juices and superfine sugar to a boil in a saucepan, stirring until sugar is dissolved. Boil 30 seconds more.

5. Glaze: Whisk together confectioners' sugar and lemon juice in a bowl.

6. Serving: When cake is done, leave oven on and let cake cool in pan on a wire rack set on a baking sheet 15 minutes. Turn out onto rack and let cool 10 minutes more. Transfer to a shallow dish. Brush syrup over cake. Continue brushing syrup from dish until all syrup is used. Return cake to wire rack; let dry in oven 5 minutes. Immediately brush with glaze. Let cool completely. Cake can be stored, covered, up to 1 day.

7. Spoon whipped cream into center of cake; top with candied zest and serve.

Seeds of Glory

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POPPY-SEED TWISTS

Active Time: **1 hr. 10 min.**
Total Time: **2 hr. 30 min.**
Makes: **16**

DOUGH

- **3 packages (2¼ teaspoons each) active dry yeast**
- **1 cup whole milk, warmed**
- **1 large egg**
- **¼ cup sugar**
- **2 teaspoons coarse salt**
- **3¾ cups all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting**
- **2¼ sticks cold unsalted butter**

FILLING AND TOPPING

- **11 tablespoons unsalted butter, room temperature**
- **½ cup sugar**
- **All-purpose flour for dusting**
- **1 large egg, lightly beaten**
- **3 tablespoons poppy seeds**
- **1 tablespoon white sesame seeds**

1. Dough: Whisk yeast into milk in a small bowl until dissolved. Add egg, sugar, and salt. Gradually stir in flour. Turn out dough onto a lightly floured surface and knead until smooth and supple, about 5 minutes.

2. Roll out dough to an 11-inch square. Cut 6 tablespoons butter into very thin slices and place on bottom two-thirds of dough. Fold top one-third of dough over (like a business letter), then fold over again to make three layers. Transfer to a baking sheet, drape with plastic wrap, and refrigerate 30 minutes.

3. Place dough with a short side facing you and opening on right, like a book. Roll out dough to a 10-by-15-inch rectangle. Cover bottom two-thirds with 6 tablespoons butter, fold into thirds as in step 2, and refrigerate 30 minutes. Roll out dough again; repeat process with remaining 6 tablespoons butter.

4. Filling and topping: Preheat oven to 400°. Stir together butter and sugar until smooth. Roll out dough on a lightly floured surface to an 11-by-16-inch rectangle. Spread butter mixture on bottom two-thirds of dough. Fold top one-third of dough over, then fold over again to make three layers.

5. Place dough with a long side facing you. Brush top with egg, then sprinkle with both seeds to cover top, gently pressing seeds into dough. Cut dough in

half crosswise, then cut each half into 8 slices. Twist each slice, pulling slightly to form a tight spiral. Place on parchment-lined rimmed baking sheets, pressing on ends to secure shape. Drape with a kitchen towel and let rise in a warm spot until puffed, about 15 minutes.

6. Bake, one sheet at a time, until deep golden, rotating once, about 18 minutes. Let cool completely on sheets on wire racks before serving.

MIXED-SEED CLUSTERS

Active Time: **10 min.**
Total Time: **2 hr.**
Makes: **About 6½ cups**

- **1¼ cups old-fashioned rolled oats**
- **1 cup chopped pistachios**
- **½ cup packed light-brown sugar**
- **¼ cup white sesame seeds**
- **2 tablespoons anise seeds**
- **½ cup pumpkin seeds**
- **½ cup ground flaxseeds**
- **1 teaspoon coarse salt**
- **⅓ cup honey**
- **¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil**
- **2 large egg whites**

1. Preheat oven to 300°. Combine all ingredients in a large bowl until well coated, then spread mixture on a rimmed baking sheet, patting into an even ¼-inch-thick layer.

2. Bake 35 minutes. Use a wide spatula to flip in large sections. Flatten back into a single layer and bake 10 minutes more. Let cool completely on a wire rack.

3. Scrape up baked seed mixture with spatula and break into chunks. Clusters can be stored at room temperature up to 1 week.

SEEDED SAVORY QUICK BREAD

Active Time: **20 min.**
Total Time: **3 hr. 40 min.**
Makes: **One 9-by-5-inch loaf**

- **Vegetable-oil cooking spray**
- **2 cups whole-wheat pastry flour**
- **2 cups spelt flour**
- **½ cup plus 2 teaspoons sunflower seeds, toasted**
- **½ cup plus 1 teaspoon black sesame seeds**
- **2 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon caraway seeds**
- **2 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon flaxseeds**
- **2 teaspoons baking powder**
- **1 teaspoon baking soda**
- **2 teaspoons coarse salt**
- **1½ cups whole milk, room temperature**
- **¾ cup buttermilk, room temperature**
- **2 tablespoons honey**
- **2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil**

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Coat a 9-by-5-inch loaf pan with cooking spray. Line with parchment, leaving a 1-inch overhang on long sides. Spray parchment.

2. Whisk together flours, ½ cup each sunflower and black sesame seeds, 2 tablespoons each caraway and flaxseeds, baking powder, baking soda, and salt in a large bowl.

3. Stir together milk, buttermilk, honey, and oil in a large bowl until honey is dissolved. Add flour



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mixture; beat until combined, about 1 minute. Transfer to prepared pan; sprinkle with remaining seeds, pressing gently to adhere.

4. Bake until a tester inserted in middle comes out clean, about 1 hour, 5 minutes. Let cool 20 minutes in pan on a wire rack, then turn out onto rack and let cool completely. Bread can be stored at room temperature up to 1 week, or frozen up to 1 month.

SEEDED SARATOGA TORTE

Active Time: **35 min.**
Total Time: **1 hr.**
Serves: **8 to 10**

- **2 tablespoons white sesame seeds**
- **¼ cup pumpkin seeds**
- **¼ cup sunflower seeds**
- **2 tablespoons poppy seeds**
- **3 large egg whites, room temperature**
- **¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon superfine sugar**
- **1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract**
- **⅛ teaspoon coarse salt**
- **1 sleeve (5 ounces) graham crackers, finely ground with some bigger pieces remaining (1¼ cups)**
- **½ cup cherry or other red-fruit preserves**
- **¾ cup heavy cream**

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment. Trace an 8-inch circle on top with a pencil; turn marked-side down.

2. Spread sesame, pumpkin, and sunflower seeds in a single layer on a rimmed baking sheet. Toast, stirring once, until golden, about 12 minutes. Let cool completely. Finely grind baked seeds in a spice grinder or food processor; transfer to a bowl. Stir in poppy seeds.

3. Whisk egg whites in a bowl on medium-high speed until soft peaks form. Slowly add ¾ cup sugar, whisking until stiff, glossy peaks form. Whisk in vanilla and salt. Fold in graham-cracker crumbs and ¾ cup seed mixture. Dab meringue under corners of parchment to secure to sheet. Spread meringue within marked circle. Bake until top is crisp and brown, about 25 minutes. Let cool completely on sheet on a wire rack.

4. Spread preserves on top of meringue. Whip cream with remaining 1 tablespoon sugar until soft peaks form. Dollop on top of preserves and sprinkle with some of remaining seed mixture. Cut into wedges with a sharp knife, wiping between slices, and serve.

SEEDED GRAHAM BISCOTTI

Active Time: **35 min.**
Total Time: **2 hr. 35 min.**
Makes: **3 dozen**

- **1⅓ cups all-purpose flour**
- **¾ cup graham flour or whole-wheat flour**
- **1 teaspoon baking powder**
- **1 teaspoon baking soda**
- **¾ teaspoon coarse salt**
- **¼ teaspoon ground allspice**
- **¼ cup hemp seeds**
- **1 tablespoon fennel seeds**
- **¾ cup packed light-brown sugar**
- **2 large eggs, room temperature**
- **1 vanilla bean, split lengthwise, seeds scraped**
- **1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract**
- **1 teaspoon finely grated orange zest**
- **¾ cup whole almonds, toasted**
- **2 tablespoons coarse sanding sugar**
- **2 tablespoons white sesame seeds**

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Whisk together flours, baking powder, baking soda, salt, allspice, and hemp and fennel seeds in a bowl. In another bowl, beat brown sugar, eggs, vanilla seeds and extract, and zest on medium speed until pale and thickened, about 4 minutes. Beat in flour mixture. Stir in almonds.

2. Shape dough into a 3-by-12-inch log. Combine sanding sugar and sesame seeds on a rimmed baking sheet; roll log in mixture to completely coat. Transfer to a parchment-lined baking sheet; bake until golden, about 30 minutes. Let cool completely on sheet on a wire rack.

3. Transfer log to a cutting board. Slice with a serrated knife into ⅓-inch-thick slices. Return slices to baking sheet. Bake until golden brown, rotating sheet once, about 10 minutes. Let cool completely on sheet on wire rack before serving.

SEEDED CRACKERS

Active Time: **45 min.**
Total Time: **4 hr.**
Makes: **16**

- **1¼ cups warm water**
- **1 tablespoon instant yeast (from two ¼-ounce packages)**
- **1 tablespoon cumin seeds**
- **2 cups all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting**
- **¾ cup rye flour**
- **½ cup whole-wheat flour**
- **⅓ cup nigella seeds**
- **⅓ cup sesame seeds**
- **⅓ cup flaxseeds**
- **2 teaspoons coarse salt**

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1. Whisk together water and yeast in the bowl of an electric mixer. Attach the dough hook; add remaining ingredients. Beat on medium speed until dough is smooth and slightly tacky, about 7 minutes. Cover bowl with plastic wrap and let rise in a warm spot until almost doubled in size, about 1 hour.

2. Preheat oven to 425°. Turn out dough onto a lightly floured surface and pat into a 1-inch-thick square. Cut into 16 equal pieces, then shape each into a ball, keeping other balls covered as you work.

3. Working with one piece at a time and using a small amount of flour, flatten each ball with your hands, then roll out as thinly as possible to about the thickness of the seeds (shapes will be irregular). Transfer each piece to a parchment-lined baking sheet, two to a sheet. Dock top of crackers with a fork, covering with holes.

4. Bake in batches, flipping each cracker over halfway through, until golden on edges, about 10 minutes a batch. Transfer crackers with tongs to wire racks and let cool completely before serving. Crackers can be stored in a resealable plastic bag up to 1 month.

Shades of Spring

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BROWN-SUGAR COOKIES

Active Time: **1 hr. 45 min.**
Total Time: **4 hr., plus overnight**
Makes: **Fifty 3-inch cookies or twenty-two 5-inch cookies**

For an egg-shaped cookie cutter, you can start with an oval cutter and bend one end into a slight point.

- **4 cups all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting**
- **1 teaspoon baking powder**
- **¾ teaspoon coarse salt**
- **2 sticks unsalted butter, room temperature**
- **1 cup packed dark-brown sugar**
- **1 cup granulated sugar**
- **2 large eggs**
- **2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract**
- **Royal icing (for recipe, go to *marthastewart.com/easter-royal-icing*)**
- **Fine sanding sugars, in various colors**

1. Whisk together flour, baking powder, and salt in a bowl. In another bowl, beat butter with sugars on medium speed until pale and fluffy, about 3 minutes. Beat in eggs and vanilla. Reduce speed to low; gradually beat in flour mixture. Divide dough in half; flatten into disks. Wrap each in plastic and refrigerate until firm, 1 hour or overnight.

2. Preheat oven to 325°. Let dough stand at room temperature until pliable. Roll out on a lightly floured surface to just under ¼ inch thick, dusting with flour as needed. Cut out shapes with cutters; transfer to parchment-lined baking sheets. Reroll scraps and repeat. Freeze until firm, about 15 minutes. Bake until golden, rotating sheets once, about 18 minutes. Let cool completely on sheets on wire racks.

3. For cookies with white and colored dots: Use a pastry bag fitted with a small round tip (such as #3) to make icing dots (about half as many dots as you want on finished cookies). Sprinkle with sanding sugar and let set, then shake off excess sugar. Pipe additional dots on cookies; let dry.

4. To coat cookie surface with icing: Place icing in a shallow dish and carefully dip cookie into icing, leaving a thin border. Transfer to a wire rack and sprinkle with sanding sugar, if desired. Let set and shake off excess sugar. If desired, pipe additional dots on cookies (or pipe a dot for a rabbit's eye). Let dry overnight. Cookies can be stored between layers of parchment up to 1 week.

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Why We Love Them

"We have an amazing collection of cast-iron molds, some dating back 100 years," says Cirone. Included in the company's archive is a large selection of vintage Easter molds—among them exquisite, lifelike bunnies, ranging from 3½ to 17 inches tall, that can be tucked into baskets or used in table decorations. *From left:* **Bunny,** *from $12;* **sitting rabbit,** *$59;* **Village bunnies,** *from $28 each;* **hazelnut truffle squares,** *$34 for 8; and* **French mint bars,** *$3 each, li-lac chocolates.com.*

AMERICAN MADE

Li-Lac Chocolates

PHOTOGRAPH BY LENNART WEIBULL

The story of Li-Lac Chocolates began in 1920s melting-pot New York City, when George Demetrious, a Greek chocolatier trained in Paris, immigrated to the U.S. and opened a chocolate shop in Greenwich Village. For decades, he made small-batch chocolates, including almond bark and French mint bars, for his loyal customers. Ninety-two years later, this New York institution continues the tradition, crafting confections the same way Demetrious did—in copper kettles and on marble-top tables. "We have generations of families who have grown up on Li-Lac Chocolates," says current co-owner Anthony Cirone. Together with two partners, he wants to reach a wider audience. They have started a wholesale business and opened a facility in Brooklyn where customers can watch candy being made. Yet one thing won't change: "The recipes are untouchable," says Cirone. "They are locked in the safe, and no one has the combination." —*Melissa Ozawa*

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WHO STRIVES VALIANTLY;

WHO ERRS, WHO COMES
SHORT AGAIN AND AGAIN;

WHO KNOWS
GREAT ENTHUSIASMS;

WHO SPENDS HIMSELF
IN A WORTHY CAUSE;

WHO AT THE BEST
KNOWS IN THE END

THE TRIUMPH OF
HIGH ACHIEVEMENT,

AND WHO AT THE WORST,

IF HE FAILS,
AT LEAST FAILS
WHILE DARING GREATLY.

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